

GIANT FULL-COLOR PINUP OF RICK STEAMBOAT

February 1981  
\$1.50

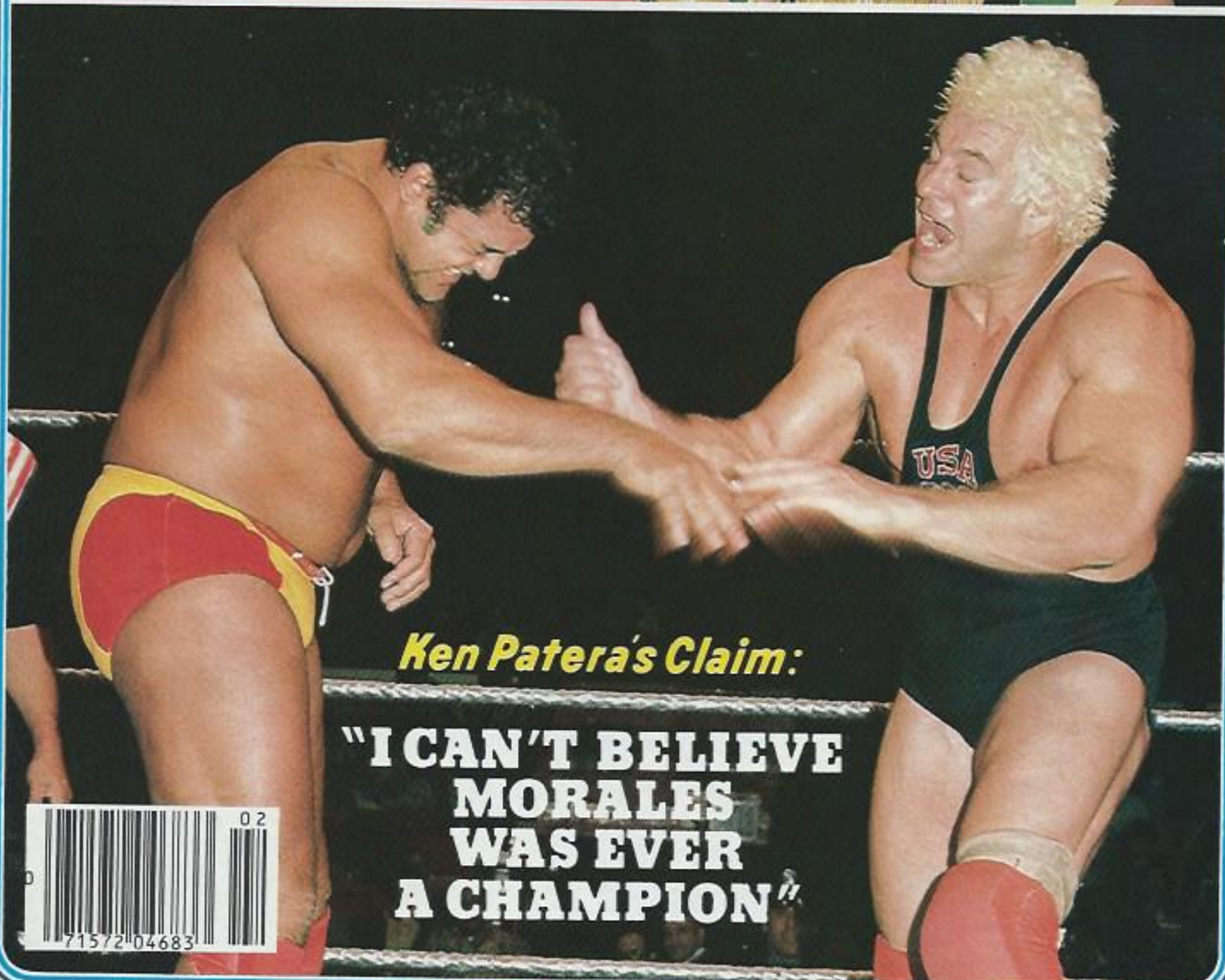
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# PRO Wrestling

## ILLUSTRATED

**THE FREEBIRDS:  
BIRDS OF A  
FEATHER  
CRIPPLE  
TOGETHER**



***Ken Patera's Claim:***

**"I CAN'T BELIEVE  
MORALES  
WAS EVER  
A CHAMPION"**





# KING'S COURT

By Peter King

**L**IKE A TERSE bulletin crackling through the airwaves, the word is out: Come to the WWF. But only if you are a rulebreaker.

Take a look at this month's WWF ratings. After Bob

Backlund, four of the sport's most vicious rulebreakers are rated next. Never before has such a logjam of terror reigned in an association.

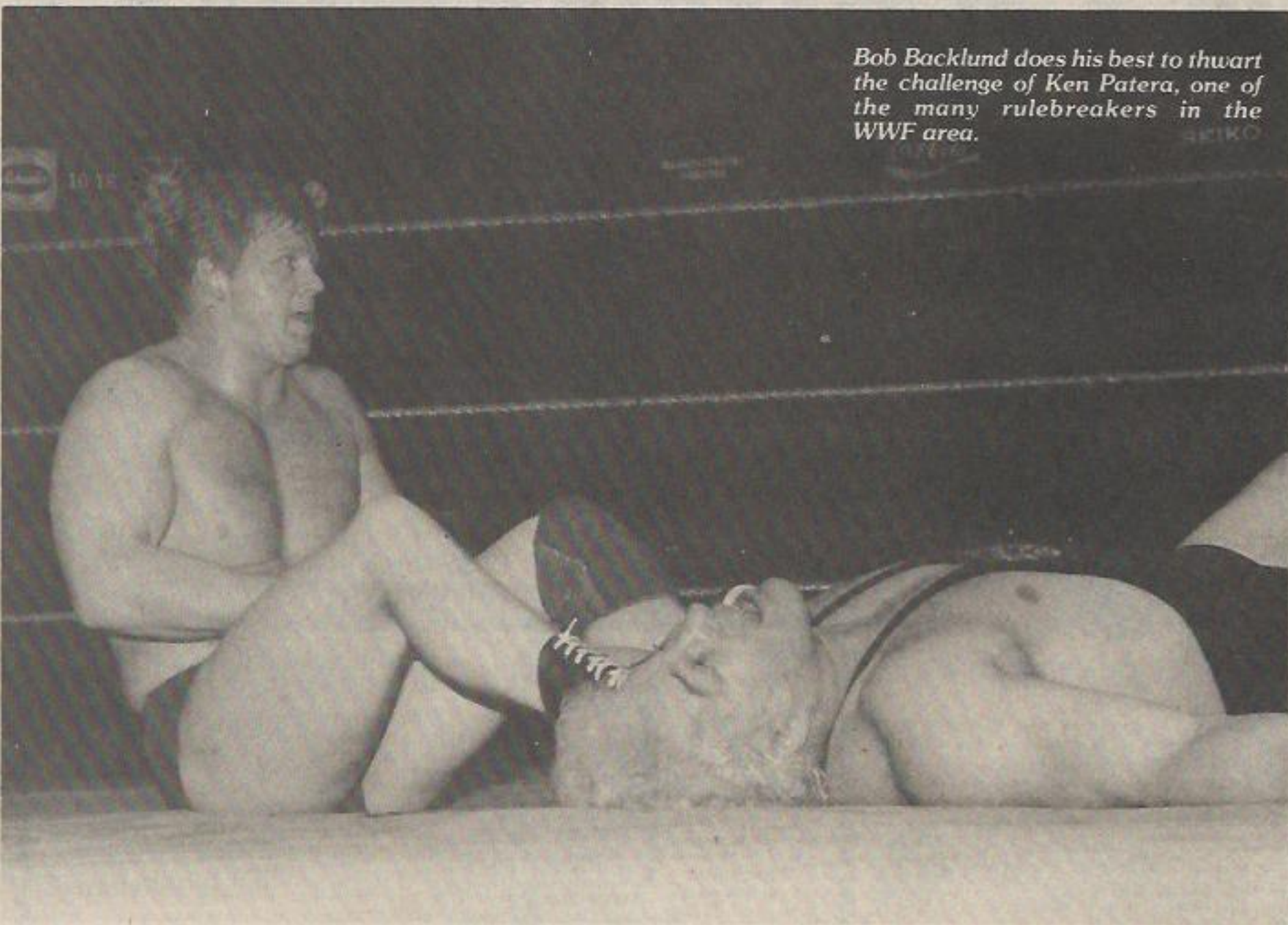
And it's your fault, Bob Backlund.

When an area falls victim to a plague of rulebreakers, usually the champion is to blame. Often, it is because he is a weak, fading champion who people feel is about to be taken. This is *not* the case with Bob Backlund.

But there are other reasons for this type of occurrence. If an area loses the balance of power between scientific wrestlers and rulebreakers, it creates a vacuum which is filled by wrestling's most notorious villains. In the WWF, scientific wrestlers have been fleeing the area like ants from a fire. Why?

"After a while," Tito Santana explains, "you grow tired of only wrestling other contenders. My whole life is based on getting a shot at the title. But in the

*(Continued on page 50)*



*Bob Backlund does his best to thwart the challenge of Ken Patera, one of the many rulebreakers in the WWF area.*



# RINGSIDE

With Bill Apter

**E**XCITED IS JUST a mild word to describe the feeling of elation fans felt after Rick Steamboat won the Mid-Atlantic title from the vicious Hussein Arab.

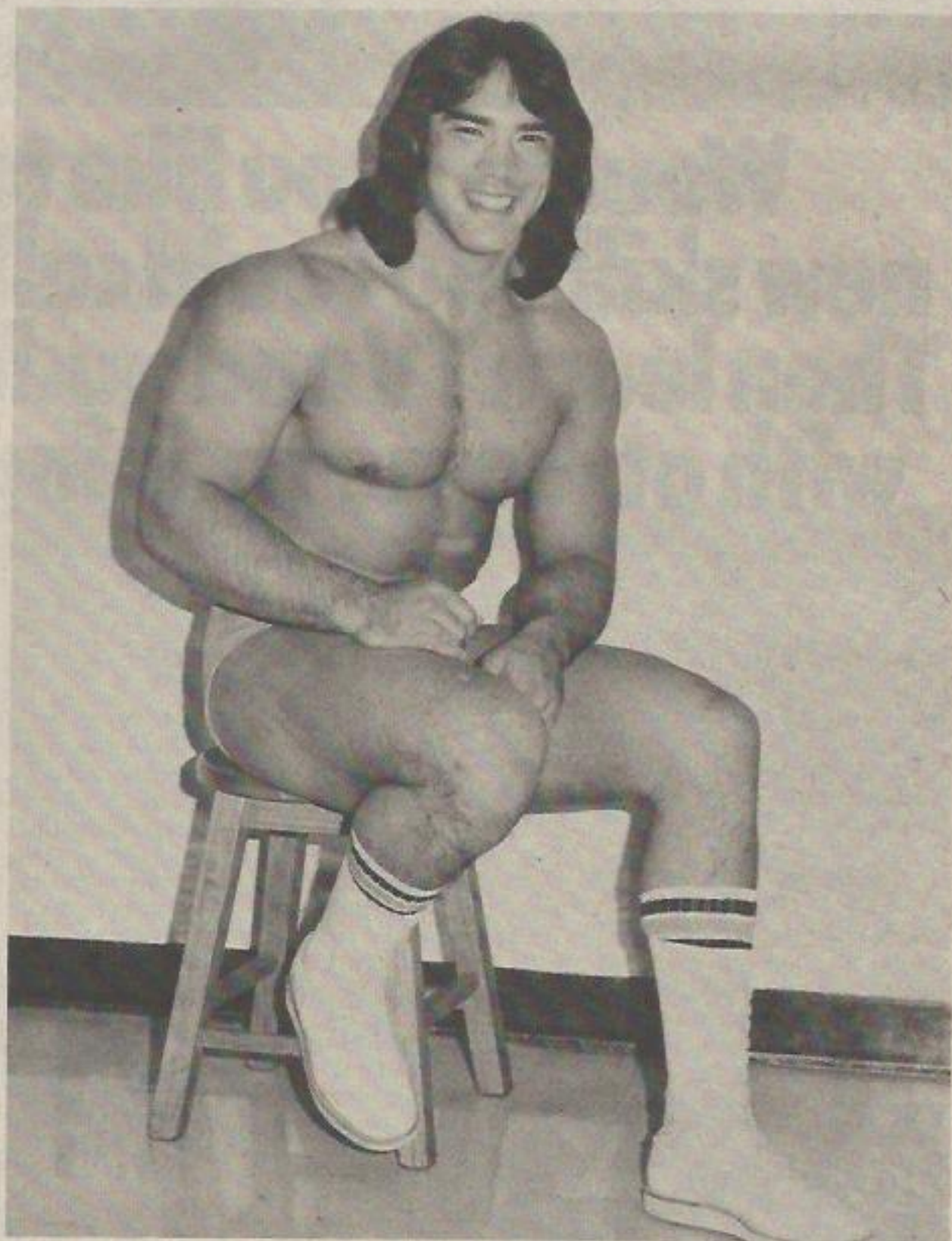
"I've been trying to regain this title for what seems to be a lifetime," said Steamboat, who has held that belt on several occasions. "I feel a victory for every scientific grappler in this area. That guy and his manager Gene Anderson really learned that evil deeds indeed don't pay off in the long run."

By the way, Hussein and Anderson aren't letting this loss get by unquestioned. They swear Hussein was kicked low several times leading to his downfall.

That big ex-Marine, Sgt. Slaughter, is telling the world the reason Bob Backlund did not appear on the early December show at New York's Madison Square Garden. "Simple," bellowed Slaughter, "I beat that young recruit so efficiently, so systematically, so thoroughly, he had to be put in sick bay for over a month." Sorry, Sarge. We found out the real reason Bob could not appear. He was busy defending his WWF championship in the Orient.

Mr. Wrestling II is doing a fine job as a periodic commentator along with Gordon Solie on TV's "Georgia Championship Wrestling." But he has yet to get the urge to come out of retirement. "At this time I am giving absolutely no thought to that," he said. "I am content the way things are."

At one time the hated Buggy



*Winning the Mid-Atlantic title from Hussein Arab meant more to Rick Steamboat (above) than just another title. In Steamboat's mind, it was a major step for scientific wrestling in the region and a major setback for rulebreaking manager Gene Anderson.*

McGraw was managed by Sir Oliver Humperdink. They split up and Humperdink and his army of wrestlers declared war on Buggy. Buggy became a fan favorite as you know. Well, now that Humper-

dink has endeared himself to the fans, he is also back in the good graces of Buggy. "Death to all rulebreakers!" Humperdink and Buggy vow.

*(Continued on page 52)*



# DRESSING ROOM

By Stu Saks



Dick Kroll raises the arm of Ivan Koloff after his stunning victory over Bruno Sammartino in 1971 (above left). Arnold Skoaland consoles Bruno, whose title reign was suddenly ended after seven and one-half years (above right).



CONSIDER MYSELF very fortunate to have witnessed some of the most memorable events in the history of Madison Square Garden: The Knicks' Willis Reed hobbling out on the floor in a valiant effort to play against Wilt Chamberlain and the Los Angeles Lakers in the seventh game of the 1970 NBA finals; the Frazier-Ali "Fight of the Century" in 1971; George Harrison's Concert for Bangladesh in 1971; The Rangers' 1979 semifinal upset victory over their metropolitan area rival New York Islanders; The 1980 Democratic Convention.

Just being among 20,000 typically crazy New York fans at these events (let alone the events themselves), will

doubtlessly leave a permanent impression in my memory banks. But the most memorable event I ever witnessed at the Garden did not elicit a typical New York response. On January 18, 1971, 22,000 New Yorkers sat in silence, their unbelieving eyes staring into a 22-foot ring where an unbelievable occurrence had been witnessed.

It was a frustrating Monday night for the 21,106 Garden enthusiasts. Young Jose Rivera was nearly decapitated by a brutal newcomer from Eagle Pass, Texas, named Blackjack Mulligan; madman Bulldog Brower took apart popular Tony Marino; and the hated Mongols retained their WWF tag team championship when

the time limit stopped the bout just as Chief Jay Strongbow clamped his sleeperhold on Gito. The only saving grace of the evening was Pedro Morales' victory over The Wolfman in the popular Puerto Rican's return to the City after a five-year absence. Oh, there would be one more bright spot in an otherwise depressing night of wrestling. Ivan Koloff, who for months had been crippling WWF wrestlers, would finally meet a man equally as strong if not stronger. This man would meet Koloff on his own terms. He would hurt Koloff badly, the fans hoped. Or if not, he would at least leave the ring with his WWF championship belt as he had after every bout for seven and one-half years.

It was a sad night for the wrestling fans at Madison Square Garden. It was a sad night for Bruno Sammartino.

It all happened so quickly. One moment Bruno had the upperhand and appeared on his way to victory. Suddenly Koloff was in control. He punched Bruno to the canvas, delivered a series of stomps, and climbed to the top turnbuckle. The fans thought little of it. Bruno had been in that predicament so many times

(Continued on page 62)



# A—ON— ASSIGNMENT

BY STEVEN FARHOOD

**M**ATT BROCK'S BREATH smelled so bad, I thought he spent the night in a distillery, not a bar. After playing basketball last month with Ivan Koloff and Nikolai Volkoff, I couldn't wait to hear where he was sending me this time.

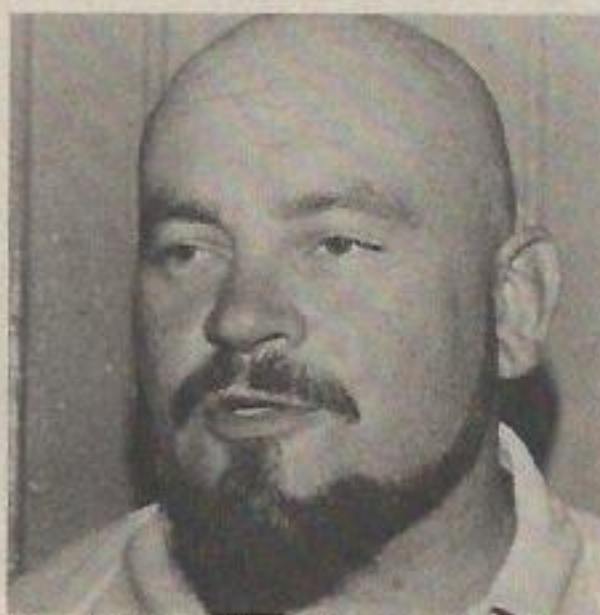
"Farhood? Where's Farhood?" he shouted, bursting into my office. "Farhood, got a doozy for ya this month. You're going down to the Carolinas to play some poker with some of the boys. You know, Race, Stevens, Duncum, some of the good ol' boys. Can't really get to know some of these guys till you take their money."

Poker? Now that's not a half-bad assignment. Being a bit of a gambler (I learned to play poker with a bunch of Chinese guys on 30th Street in Manhattan who used to whisper "Come to me," when they wanted a certain card), I figured I could handle myself in any game. Even against rulebreakers.

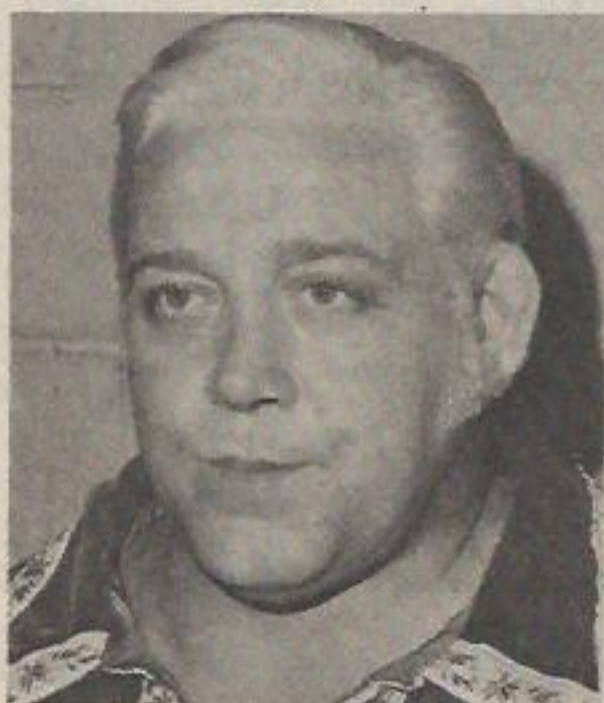
Almost before Brock could tell me the story of how he lost the babe by his side when Bruiser pulled out a straight flush from under the table one night in St. Louis, I was packed and on a jet. Humming the song, "Luck Be An Arab Tonight," I was psyched. The city slicker is gonna teach those country hicks a few new tricks, I thought to myself.

Gene Anderson was the organizer of the card game, which was to take place in the back room of a certain pub in

Charlotte, North Carolina. There were matches at the Coliseum that night, and I attended. Some of the guys who were supposed to be in the card game took pretty serious beatings. Didn't stop them from showing up though. With a huge cigar dangling from his mouth, Anderson dealt the first hand (seven-card stud was the only game they played)



*Ivan Koloff (above) was thrilled to take money from the "capitalists." Ray Stevens (below) took a good portion of Farhood's money with aces and fours.*



at midnight.

It was clear Anderson was the boss. I sat between Harley Race and Ivan Koloff. Bobby Duncum and Ray Stevens completed the field. If those Chinese guys could've only seen me. Not to mention my mother.

The stakes were high, higher than I had ever played. Let's just say if you didn't sit down with a half-a-grand to start, you might as well head back to the bar and suck on the 75-cent beers all night. Brock had fronted me \$250. The other \$250 was my own.

The atmosphere was slightly more decadent than I had expected. Race was by far the quietest of them all. He barely spoke. Stevens and Duncum could've killed a sewer rat with their language. And Anderson seemed happy to blow smoke in my face. Koloff? He just kept mumbling about "taking all these capitalists' money."

The first hand was an omen. I opened with a pair of kings, and I ended up with two pairs, kings and sevens. The only player calling my bets was Stevens. I figured he was just checking me out and keeping me honest, because he didn't even have a pair on the board. But after he called my final bet (there was \$110 in the pot), he turned over his hole cards. Two aces and a four. It gave him two pair that happened to be higher than mine.

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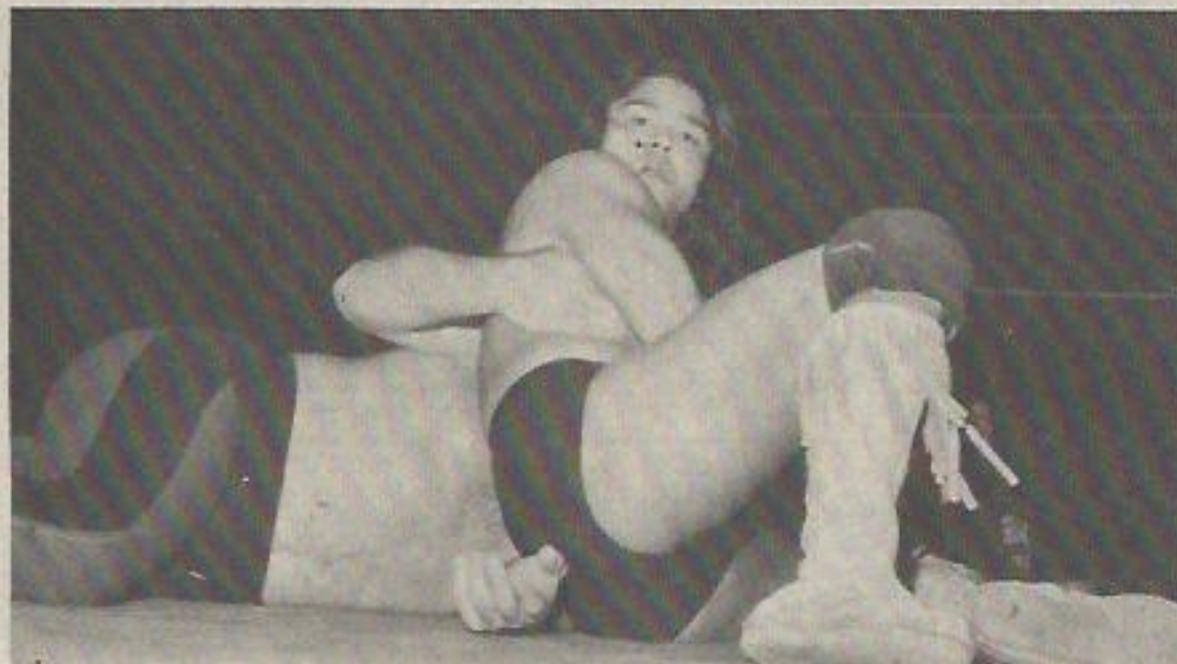
# THE MORGENSTEIN REPORT .....

By Gary Morgenstein

## YOUNGBLOOD SHOULDN'T RUSH

Recently, Jay Youngblood suffered a shattering physical and emotional blow from NWA tag team champions Jimmy Snuka and Ray Stevens. In a title match, Snuka and Stevens

concentrate on avoiding bitterness, quite a difficult task considering the brutal attack. But maintaining a proper perspective will eventually save Youngblood's career. The temptation of revenge is too overpowering for Youngblood, too easy to succumb to. Should



ganged up on Youngblood, and seriously injured his leg. Immediately, Rick Steamboat, Jay's best friend and tag team partner, vowed vengeance. Though Steamboat obtained a measure of revenge when he unseated Hussein Arab (stablemates of Snuka and Stevens) for the Mid-Atlantic Heavyweight crown, Youngblood's condition remains unchanged. Oh sure, Jay will eventually recover and return to the ring. But what happens to him mentally is the key factor. Youngblood should

immerse himself in an unceasing war he cannot really ever hope to win, he would be the ultimate victim. And that would only destroy one of wrestling's most promising young stars. At this juncture, Steamboat should act the voice of reason, calmly encouraging Youngblood instead of loudly declaring unconditional war on Gene Anderson's men. This is the real test of Steamboat's supposed maturity. Youngblood's career rests on Steamboat's decision.

## MANIAC SLAUGHTER

WWF wrestling fans are now subjected to yet another in a long line of insane Grand Wizard proteges. From the refuge pile of the United States Marine Corps, The Wiz plucked a large, big-mouthed, utterly arrogant and totally immoral man by the name of Sgt. Slaughter. It has been my dubious pleasure to see Slaughter wrestle on three occasions. Each time, his capacity for cruelty increased. If that wasn't bad enough, Slaughter brings an overbearing cockiness and conceit that is sickening. What separates Slaughter from other rulebreakers is his alarming capacity to implement exactly what he predicts. Whatever his methods, the man is a good wrestler. An indication of his menace may be in Bruno Sammartino's declaration of war. Sammartino doesn't waste his time with non-entities. For Bruno to devote himself to eliminating Slaughter acknowledges that Bruno, like a growing number of WWF observers, believes Slaughter poses a distinct threat to the tradition of law and wrestling order in this federation.

(Continued on page 54)



If you wish to contribute to Shocket's mailbag, send your letters to:

**TOP ROPE**  
Box 48  
Rockville Centre, N.Y.  
11571

# OFF THE TOP ROPE

By Dan Shocket

**T**HERE IS A new fan club which many of my readers have already joined named "Morons For Steamboat." It includes everyone who continues sending in letters about Rick Steamboat. Just send in a letter and you're an automatic member. None of these letters will be printed in this column, nor will they be read by me (my secretary has orders to burn any correspondence with Steamboat's name on it). So, morons, send in your letters and join up today.

Now, to this month's correspondence:

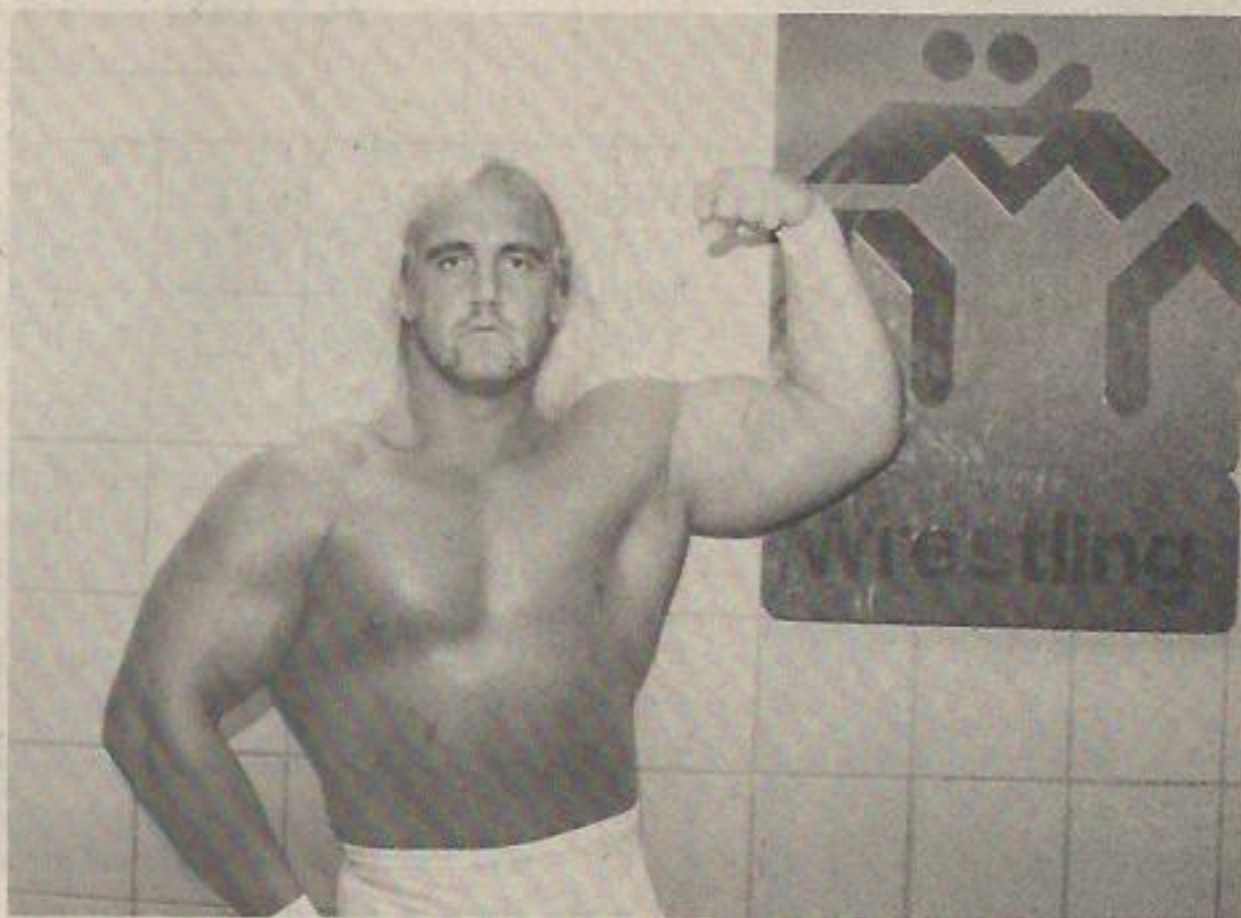
Dear Dan Shocket,

How come when the wrestlers come to Boston Gardens, all the interviews say the Boston fans like Bob Backlund and Pedro Morales? A lot of people would rather go for strong and handsome men like Hulk Hogan and Ken Patera.

SHARON PAGLIARULO  
Boston, MA

Dear Sharon Pagliarulo,

Announcers are hirelings of the WWF. The last thing the WWF wants is to have people cheering wrestlers they can't control. By having the inter-



A small minority of the fans favor such men as Hulk Hogan (above) and Ken Patera. "Top Rope" contributor Sharon Pagliarulo feels that announcers who think that only men like Bob Backlund have fan support are mistaken.

viewers say everyone likes a lackey like Backlund, they hope saying it will make it true. Happily, there are still fans who can think for themselves. They are few in number, but each one is to be treasured.

Dear Dummy Shocket,

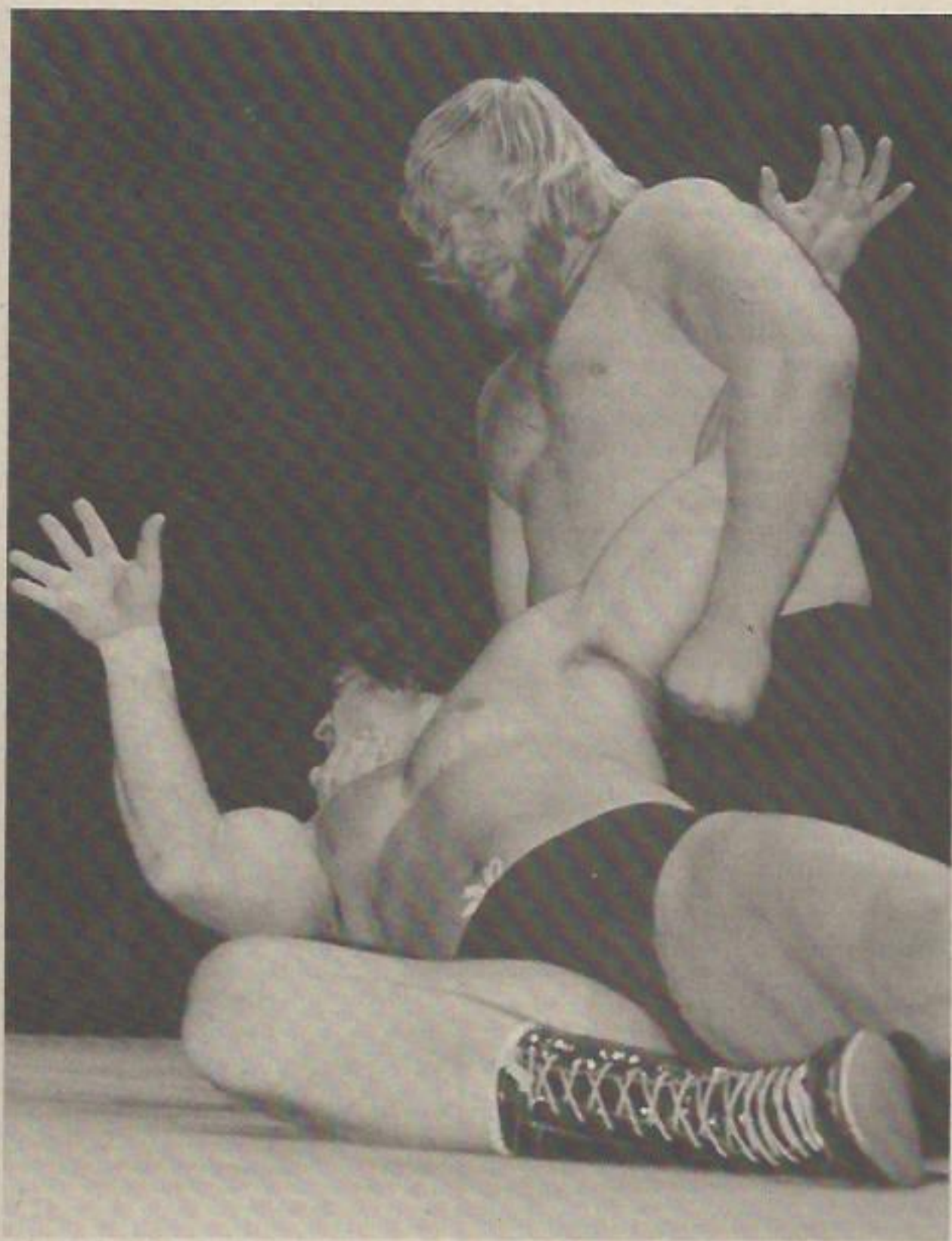
If you think you're so smart, just listen: one night while I was lying in my bed reading *Pro Wrestling Illustrated*, I showed a picture of Greg Valentine and

Ray Stevens to my cat. She suddenly began growling and then started tearing up the picture with her claws.

Then, when I showed her a picture of Rick Steamboat and Jay Youngblood, she began purring and went to sleep. That just goes to show that even animals as well as people know who's the best.

JANE SANDERS  
Warsaw, VA





*John Studd holds his opponent firmly in place and twists his neck beyond normal limits. Dan Shocket tells reader Mike Crowley that he is fortunate to have Studd in the AWA area as he emerges into a superstar.*

**Dear Jane Sanders,**

It's difficult to reply to anyone who gets her opinions from the reaction of dumb animals. I'd suggest you try talking to people, but anything more complicated than purring and snoozing would probably be more than you could handle. Do you often consult creatures with brains the size of shriveled kumquats?

Dear Mr. Shocket,

I enjoy reading your incisive views and your column every month. I mainly follow the AWA and want you to know about a wrestler who is dominating the area.

I'm referring to Big John Studd. He recently hit Dino Bravo with a great heart punch. What are your views on this exceptional man?

MIKE CROWLEY  
Mequon, WI

**Dear Mr. Crowley,**

I agree that John Studd is an exceptional wrestler. You're lucky to have him in the AWA at this time. I think he's about a year away from reaching his peak as an athlete. You will be able to see him mature into one of the great wrestlers around. There's nothing more exciting than that.

Hi Dan,

I'm glad to see I'm not alone in liking great wrestlers. I have always liked the so-called bad guys, but decided only two years ago to let everyone know it.

Since then, Dan, I have lost a lot of friends. Some have even gone as far as not speaking to me. I don't take anything in life that seriously. People don't dislike someone because they



*Jimmy Snuka and Ray Stevens glare upon the fans. Most of them—but not all—hate the NWA tag team champions.*

don't like the same baseball or football teams. Why should wrestling be different? I respect a person's right of freedom of choice.

At matches, I've been threatened by people I don't even know. One person even had the nerve to say that Jimmy Snuka and Ray Stevens were animals, so I was also because I liked them.

GAIL SHEPHERD  
Franklin, NC

**Hi Gail,**

People who threaten other fans are not spectators but thugs. It's never been easy to go against the crowd, but the best people in history have had to suffer the same anguish. People who try to silence you are far more despicable than any so-called bad guy could ever be. □



**Every month, three reporters from PRO WRESTLING ILLUSTRATED will participate in an incisive press conference with a top wrestling star. The questions will be demanding. And the answers will reveal the innermost thoughts of the giants of the sport**

# PRESS CONFERENCE

ANDRE THE GIANT



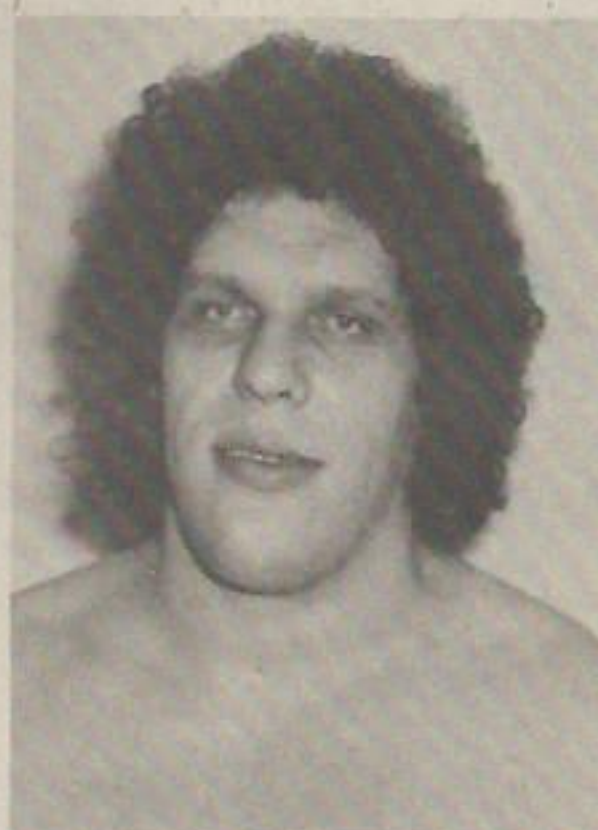
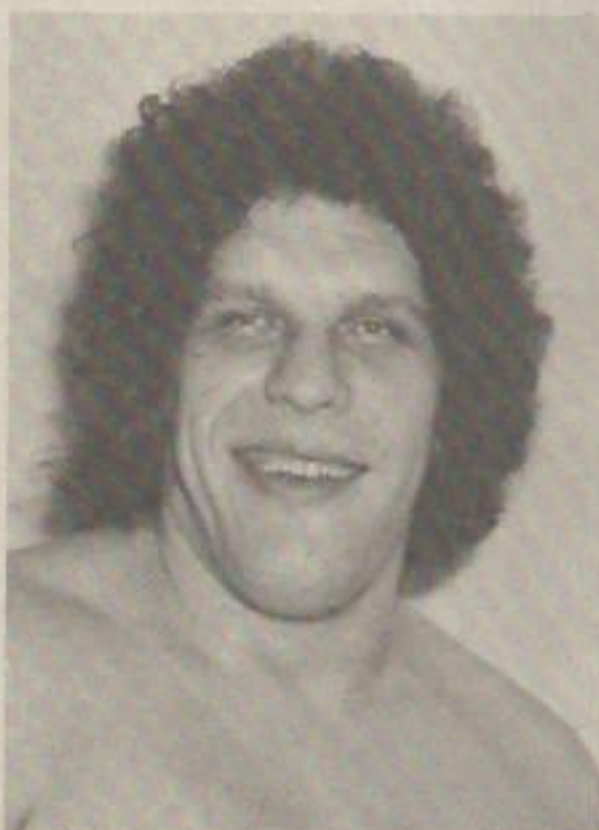
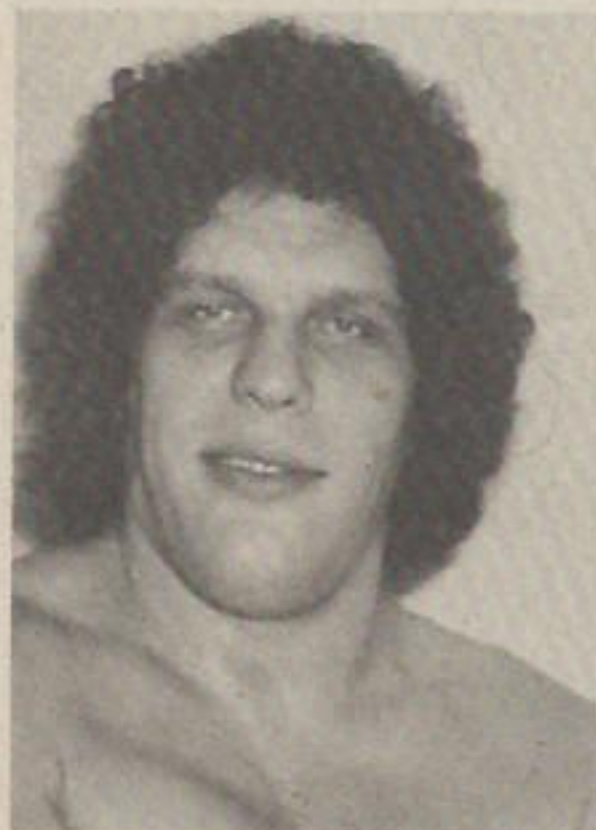
*(Andre the Giant is a big man in every sense of the word. Not only in size, but in kindness, strength, and intelligence. All across the globe, the name of Andre stands side-by-side with principles of integrity. Fans flock to his side. And Andre never refuses a fan's request. This great man has fallen victim to one painful syndrome: never winning a major championship. In the following interview, conducted by Associate Editors Gary Morgenstein, Stu Saks, and Steve Farhood, Andre discusses his career.)*



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**"[Albano] is a liar and a cheat. He is a very overrated manager. What he does best is interfere, and I do not think he should receive credit for breaking the rules."**

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**ANDRE THE GIANT:** I would like to thank you writers for having me on Press Conference.

**GARY MORGENSTEIN:** You're quite welcome, Andre. As someone who wrestles all across the nation, you're uniquely qualified to give a perspective on each area. Let's start with your feelings on the AWA.

**ANDRE:** Well, I share the sentiments of all wrestlers when I say how delighted I was to see Verne Gagne regain the title from that Nick Bockwinkel person. Verne is a true champion and a fine man. He will do much to restore the principles of fairness and decency to the title. For anyone who has had to watch

Bockwinkel disgrace the title all these years, Gagne's victory was quite heartwarming.

**STU SAKS:** There is some talk Bockwinkel is plotting a sinister plan to regain the title.

**ANDRE:** I wouldn't put it past that man.

**STEVE FARHOOD:** What would your reaction be, if any, should Bockwinkel seek to regain the title by treacherous means?

**ANDRE:** I would be available, as I always am, to help any friend if a devious man tries to trick him. But we must wait and see what Bockwinkel is planning.

**MORGENSTEIN:** You have had your encounters with some of the more famous WWF rule-

breakers, notably Captain Lou Albano and his tag team champs, The Samoans.

**ANDRE:** Yes, well, I do not like Albano. He is a liar and a cheat. And I do not think his strategy is so good. He is a very over-rated manager. What he does best is interfere, and I do not think he should receive credit for breaking the rules.

**SAKS:** Is there any rulebreaker manager you respect?

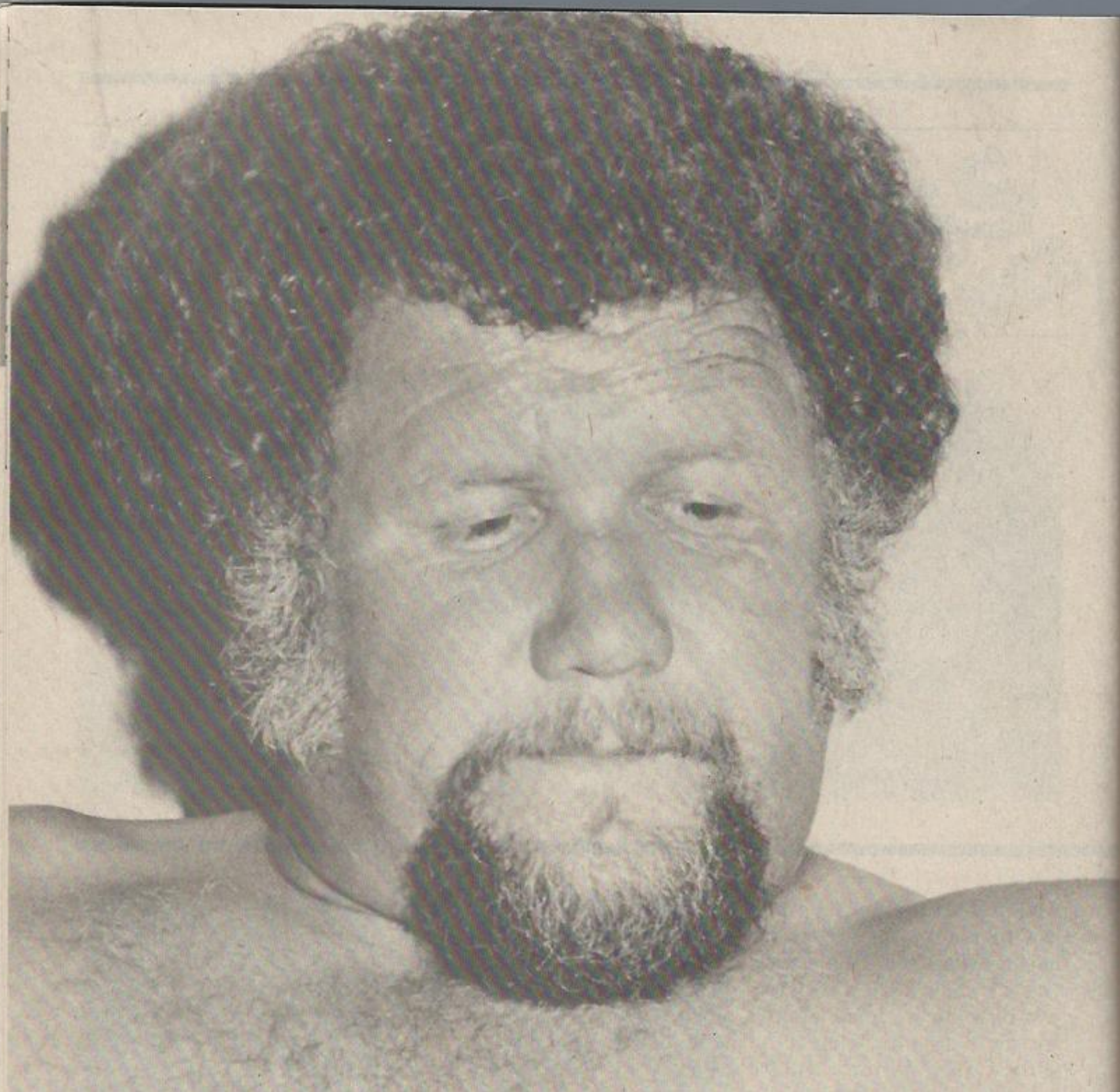
**ANDRE:** No. How can you respect a cheat?

**FARHOOD:** How would you rate The Samoans?

**ANDRE:** As champions, they horrify me because they have no respect for the rules. But you must credit them for success.

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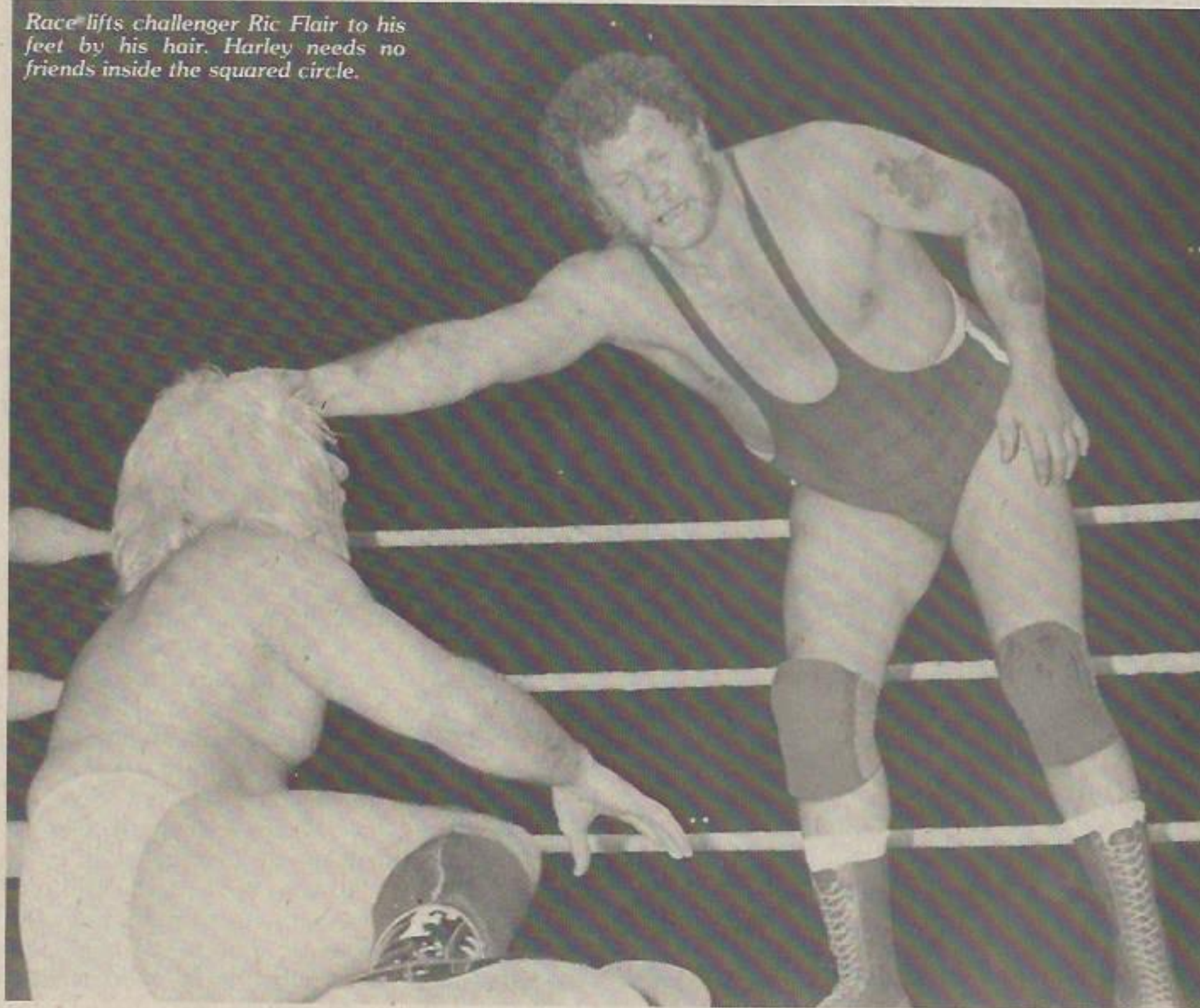


**HARLEY RACE**  
**A**  
**MAN ALONE**



Quite simply, Harley Race has no friends. Think for a minute. Who comes to the NWA champion's side when attacked? No one. Who defends his honor? No one. Time after time, Race must fight his own battles, as well as the final battle which threatens to claim his sanity—the war against loneliness

*Race lifts challenger Ric Flair to his feet by his hair. Harley needs no friends inside the squared circle.*



**T**HE ONLY FRIEND Harley Race knows is loneliness.

Oh, Race denies the effect of loneliness. He says he doesn't mind dining alone after matches. He doesn't mind dressing alone. He doesn't mind wrestling alone. He doesn't mind no one ever coming to his aid when attacked.

"Who needs 'em anyway?" snapped Race.

But no one believes you, Harley Race.

Following Race through a

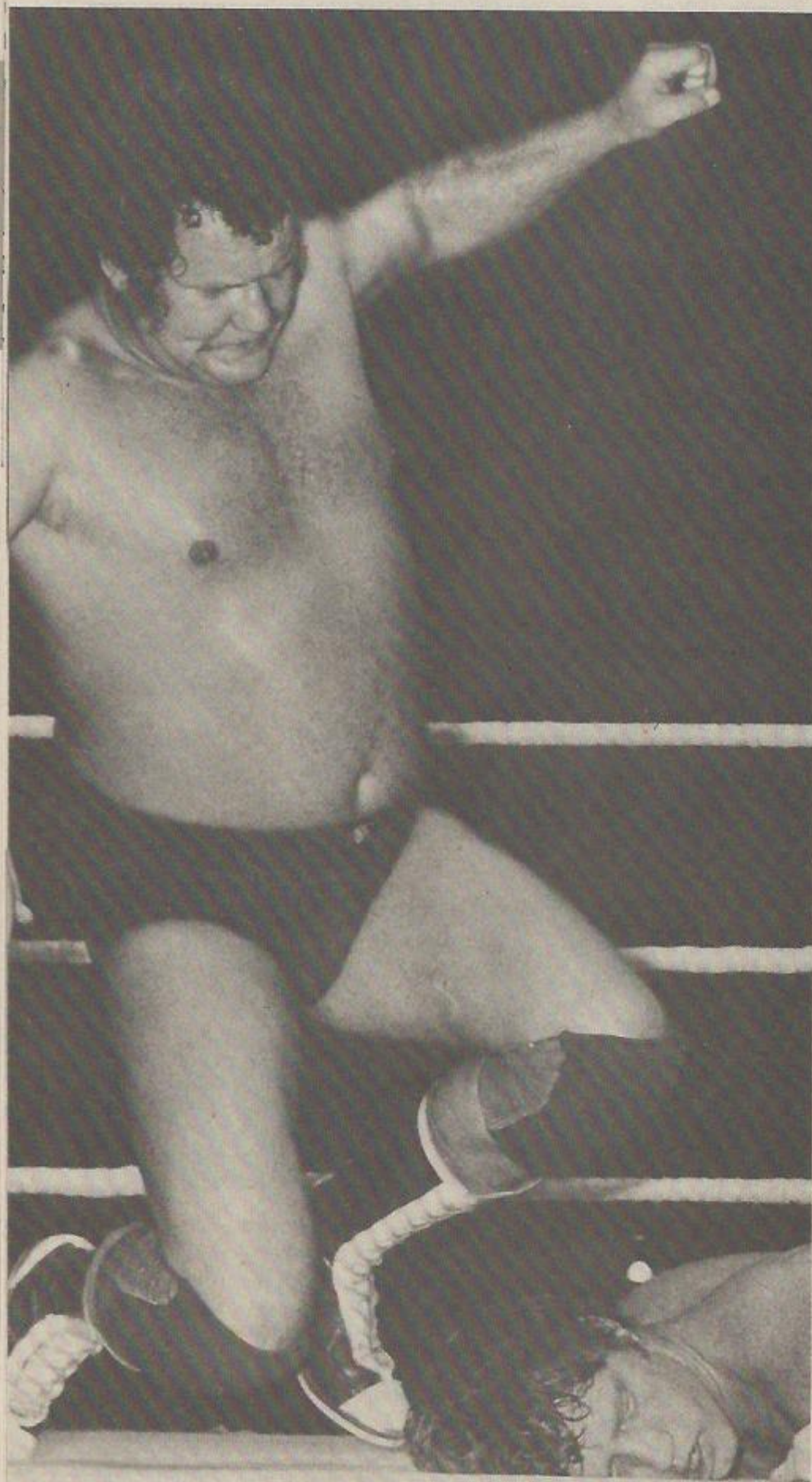
typical day produces certain definite conclusions. One, that Race truly doesn't have friends. Two, that Race acts as though it doesn't matter. And thirdly, Race is deeply effected by the painful loneliness.

Like millions of other Americans, Race begins his day with a breakfast. Large breakfast. A large steak, half a dozen eggs, home fries, bacon, juice, coffee, danish. Unlike millions of Americans, Race eats alone.

He was quiet throughout breakfast. Any time he attempted to broach a conversation, Race seemed awkward, as if the company puzzled him. He simply didn't know what to say, nor how to act. Near the end of breakfast, Race warmed up.

"Yeah, well, usually I don't care to talk while I'm eating," said Race. "I like quiet." Race jabbed at some bacon. "So what's wrong with quiet? Who needs all the jabbering around the table. Read





*Race drives his knee into the back of David Von Erich's neck. By contrast to the NWA champion, Von Erich can always count on the companionship of his brothers and father.*

an article how talking and eating causes indigestion. I can't afford any stomach problems."

Race eats quickly. He pays the check quickly, though he paused on the tip.

"Fifteen percent, huh?" Race, unaccustomed to the size of a bill for two, shrugged and dropped a large bill on the egg-stained formica table.

A clothing shop was next on Race's itinerary. As he tried on French designer jeans, the visitor couldn't help but notice Race wore one black and one blue sock. When this curiosity was pointed out to Race, he reddened with embarrassment.

"So? What's it matter, huh?"

It certainly does matter. A man with friends would have someone point out an obvious peculiarity like that.

Race has two cars. We walked over to the garage and he asked for the keys to his tiny sports car. Then he looked at me, shrugged sheepishly and asked for his long, sleek, luxury car.

"Kinda crowded for two people in my little peppy car," said Race, smiling lamely.

Though it was a couple of hours before dinner, Race suggested we stop off at his favorite watering hole, Guppy's. This particular gin mill appeals to Race.

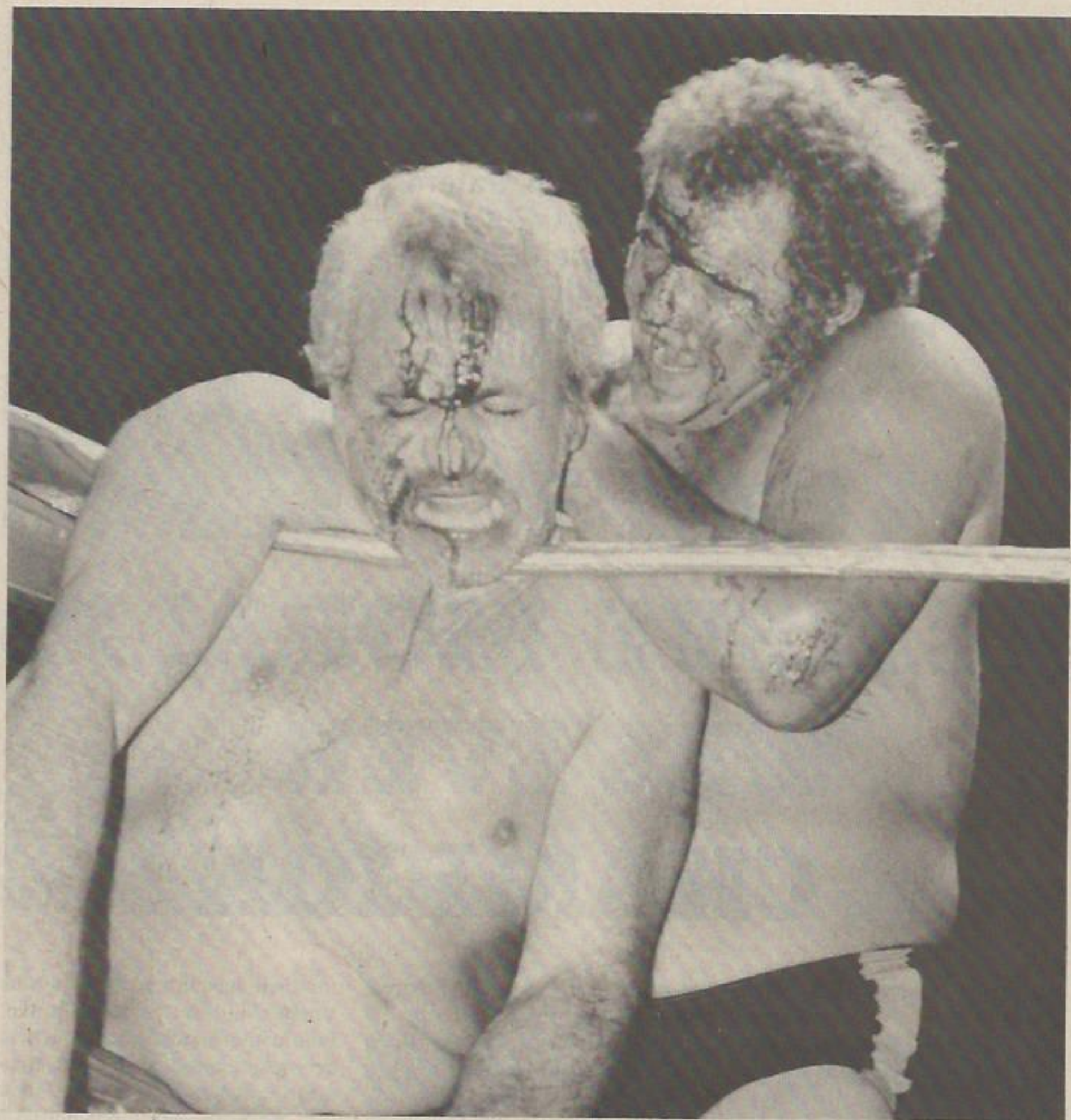
"I can be left alone," Race growled, pushing open the creaking wooden doors. "And that's what I want, understand?"

Race swaggered to the end of the bar. As he passed each patron, a greeting rang out. Race nodded and grumbled, pausing only to order a beer. Then he stopped again, realized he had company, and ordered another.

A wizened man with wisps of gray hair approached Harley and extended his hand. With reluctance, Race shook the fan's hand.

"Keep goin', Harley." Race merely nodded until the man disappeared. Another person





*Even among the sport's rulebreakers, Race has no friends. It is very doubtful that The Sheik and Harley will go out for beers after this bloody encounter. Race claims he prefers to be alone anyway.*

approached, offered greetings. Again Race tried his best to ignore the fan without appearing unduly rude. Finally Race lapsed into a silent sullenness broken only by lifting the mug of beer to his pursed lips.

Only once did Race break his silent vigil. That was when a loud eruption of laughter rocked the bar as a group of persons crowded around a table. Race stared at the

friends laughing and drinking together, let his eyes wander the bar to smaller clusters of friends, until his gaze turned to a mirror holding only his own image.

Race grimaced, only for a moment, yet it was long enough to reveal the pain of a man consigned to loneliness, a man who believes it can be no other way, a man indulging in the harshest of self-deceptions because he has

convinced himself this is what he truly wants.

But it really isn't. Within the deep dark eyes lurks a longing to have friends, to be accepted into a clique which would allow him to be himself. He hasn't found such a club. He hasn't found any friends willing to accept him as he truly is.

And that was why Race quietly paid the bar bill, slid off the stool, and out the door. Alone. □



## ***Ken Patera's Claim:***

A real sizzling feud engulfs the WWF. Inter-Continental champion Ken Patera and former WWF champion Pedro Morales meet across a battlefield already laden with taunts and blood. Patera demeans Pedro's talents. And Morales responds with angered vengeance. Someone must win.

Pity the loser



# **"I CAN'T BELIEVE MORALES WAS EVER A CHAMPION"**

PHOTOS BY STU SAKS

**P**EDRO MORALES POSSESSES an explosive temper. He knows it. His public knows it. The press knows it. Sadly for Ken Patera, the current Inter-Continental champion seemed vaguely unaware of Pedro's volatile nature until it was almost too late.

It all began with a confrontation between Morales and Patera *outside* the squared circle a month earlier. Patera taunted Morales. Not one to lightly dismiss insults, Morales responded. The two edged close to battle. Neutral observers attempted to separate them. That didn't work.

Patera and Morales fought, with Ken choking Morales with the Inter-Continental belt. Though

Morales wasn't physically injured, the emotional scars ran deep.

"I cannot forget what he did to me," shouted Morales. "I want to destroy him. I want him anywhere. I ready for any kinda action, doesn't matter, any kind of action."

In typical arrogant Patera fashion, the Inter-Continental champion scoffed at Morales' comments and challenge.

"I'm supposed to worry about some untalented bozo like that?" asked Patera, laughing. "Don't make me laugh. I've seen Morales wrestle and he is totally pathetic. There's not an ounce of skill or courage in that out-of-shape body. I can't believe Morales was ever a champion."

This verbal volley set the stage

for their inevitable battle at New York's Madison Square Garden. Before the match, both wrestlers nervously paced their respective dressing rooms.

"I ready for any kinda action," muttered Morales. "Doesn't matter. He wants to wrestle scientifically, I ready for that kinda action. He wants to brawl, I ready for that kinda action. Don't matter to me."

"Yeah, I'm worried," said Patera. "A lying cheat like Morales is capable of anything. He might bring a machine gun into the ring for all I know. That's the only way he can win, cheating and breaking the rules. How else did he ever get to be WWF champion? Surely not on a basis of talent, that's for





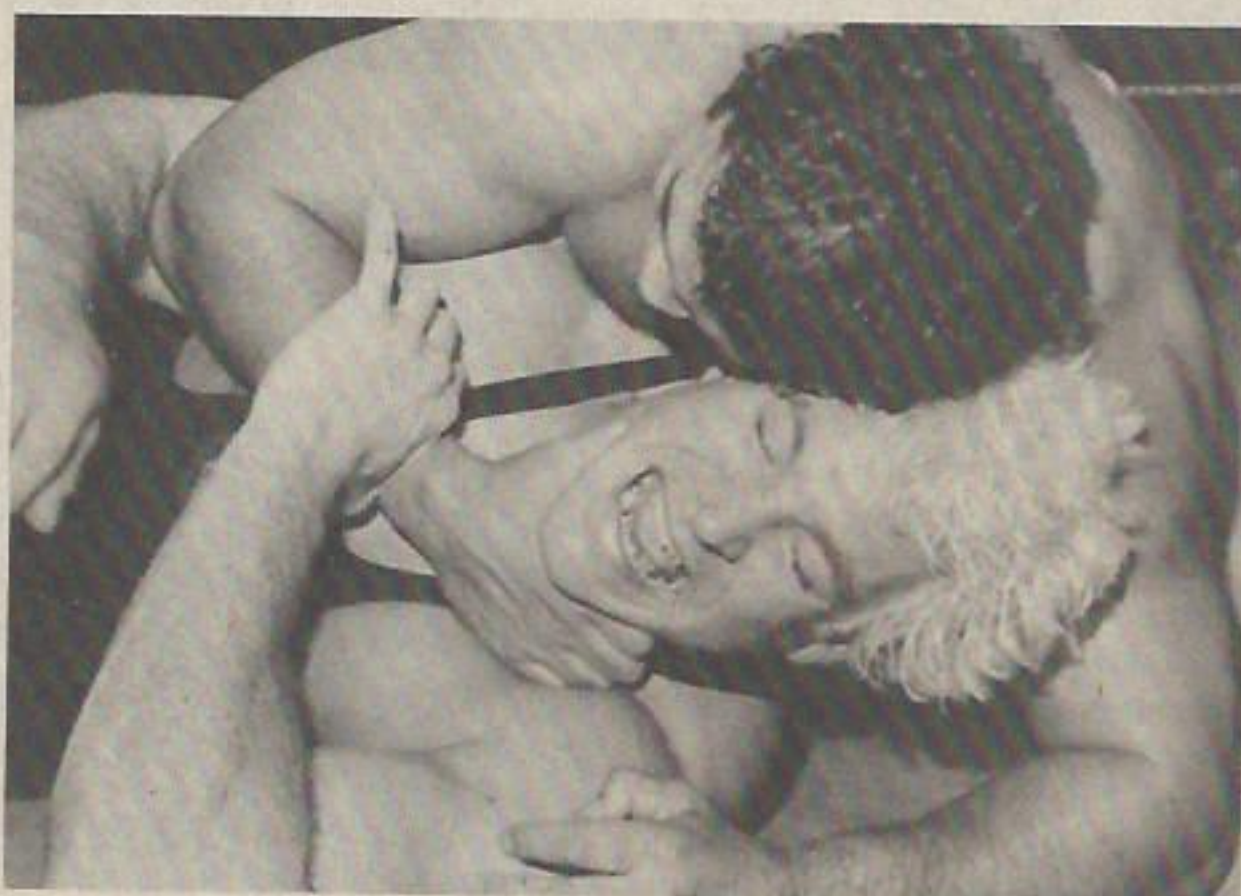
damn sure."

Probably the most surprised person in the entire Garden that night was Ken Patera. Swaggering nonchalantly toward the ring, arrogantly ignoring the boos and jeers of the capacity crowd, Patera acted as if he already had the match won by merely showing up.

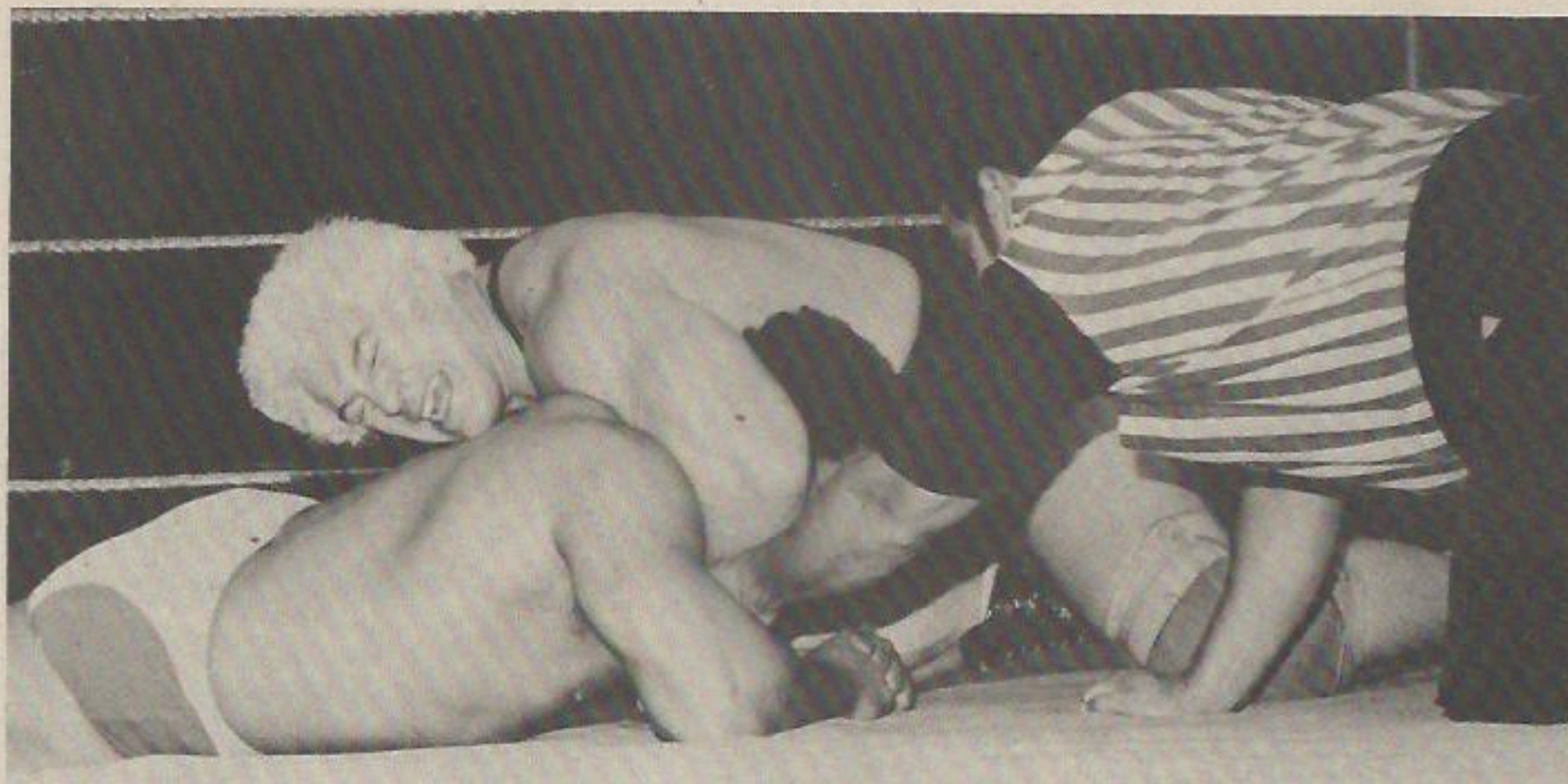
That wasn't the case, for this bout may have been Patera's toughest ever.

Surprise number one for Patera was the nature of the match right from the start. Patera thought, based on Morales past ring behavior, the former WWF champion would have attempted to wrestle scientifically. Not at all. Morales stormed into the ring with blood in his eyes.

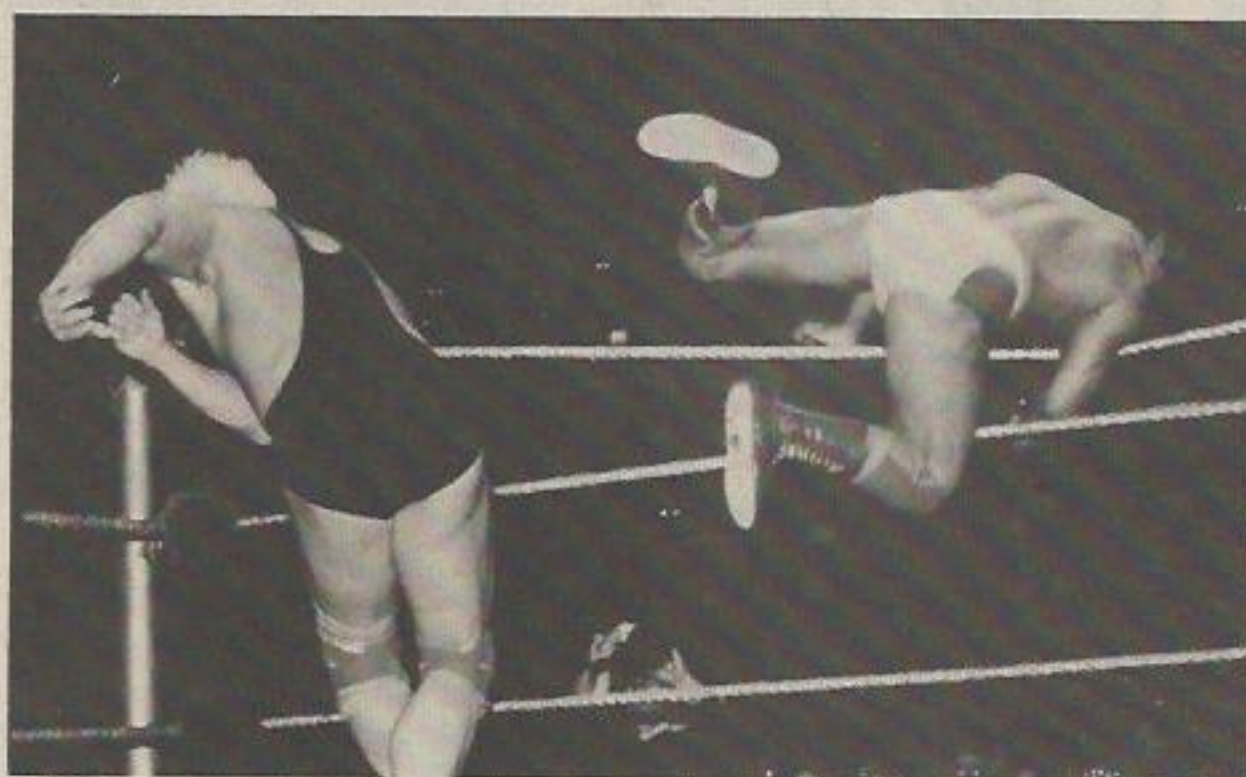
*Pedro was not about to wait around while Patera arrogantly flashed his Inter-Continental belt (opposite left). He attacked Patera before Ken could even take his warmup suit off (above) and continued his onslaught after the opening bell (below).*







*The referee tries to determine whether or not Patera is choking Morales (above). Patera flings his challenger out of the ring (below). Patera uses his superior reach to hold Morales and throw a right (bottom).*



"I gonna get you," Morales screamed, pointing a shaking finger at the grinning Patera. "I gonna pay you back, you better be ready, I gonna pay you back."

And then the explosion seized the ring. Both men dashed for each other. Initially, Patera seemed off-balance by the maniacal thrust of Morales. Recovering quickly, Patera tried to dig his fingers into Morales' eyes. All that did was incense Morales even more. After a while, the action spilled out of the ring, dragging the beleaguered referee over the ropes. Both wrestlers hurled an unbelievable



non-stop barrage of blows. With all semblance of order lost, the referee declared a double disqualification, a decision only obscuring the resolution of the feud and adding fuel to their rage.

"I know everyone had to see what Morales did to me," yelled Patera. "He kicked and he bit and he punched. He did the dirtiest tricks in the world. I hope all the world realizes what kind of cheat the man really is."

"I wanted to kill him, yes, I wanted to kill him," said Morales. "He insulted me and insulted my people and I cannot ever forgive him for that. Ken Patera cannot wrestle fairly. He has no idea how to wrestle fairly. All he understands is a brawl. Well, I ready for that. I can brawl if I have to, but I don't like to. But Patera is not a real champion. He doesn't act like a real champion. He acts like some gutter rat and I want his head, yes, I want his ugly head."

Obviously, the prize of the Inter-Continental championship was the initial lure bringing these two men together, but neither really discusses the title anymore. The importance of that honor has been lost, buried beneath their uncontrollable rage.

Now Ken Patera and Pedro Morales fight for hate. □

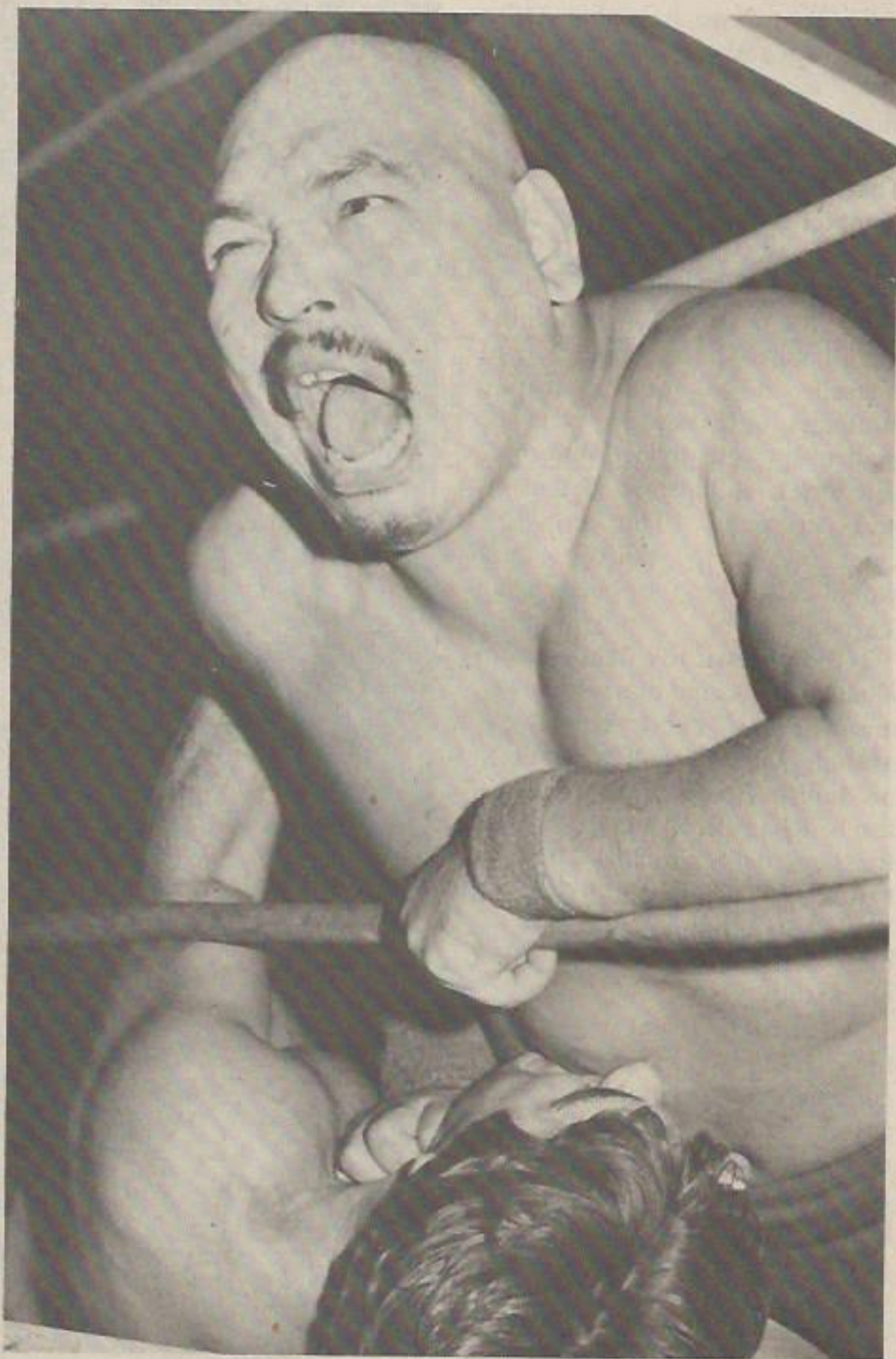


**I**T HAD BEEN a bad night for Freddie Blassie. The wrestler he'd gone to Georgia to see was worthless. Blassie couldn't do anything with the guy. Cursing his fate, Blassie got up to leave. Then he sat right down again, transfixed.

The wrestler who caught Blassie's attention was Killer Khan. There was something about the way the Mongolian grappler entered the arena that fascinated Blassie. Freddie, one of the most unscrupulous managers in wrestling history, knew this grappler was just what he wanted. Instead of cursing his fate, Blassie couldn't believe how lucky he was.

Watching Khan's match, Blassie was ecstatic. The grappler was mercilessly vicious, torturing his helpless opponent for the sheer joy of it. Blassie whispered to himself, "That's my kind of man."

After the match, Blassie rushed to the dressing room. Khan doesn't speak English, but that didn't matter. He knew that Blassie was a powerful WWF manager. Freddie wrote on a pad, "\$" and "Backlund." Khan understood perfectly.



PHOTOS BY BILL APTER

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## **KILLER KHAN-**

# **THE MONGOLIAN PLAGUE SPREADS TO THE WWF**

---

It's bad enough Killer Khan demolished arenas throughout the deep South. Many tried to halt this epidemic of violence and found themselves carted off on stretchers to the emergency rooms of Louisiana. Now WWF scientific wrestlers must find some way to stop Khan, or risk their very destruction



So it came to pass that Killer Khan became Freddie Blassie's new weapon against WWF champion Bob Backlund. The contract was signed the next day. That afternoon, Freddie took his grappler to the gym. Three hours later, Khan was exhausted. Blassie was the happiest man on earth.

For the next week, Khan didn't see Blassie. The manager locked himself in a room, creating strategies for his new grappler. The maneuvers were divided into three categories: offensive, defensive, and crippling. The crippling category was the thickest. They would also be the ones Khan learned best.

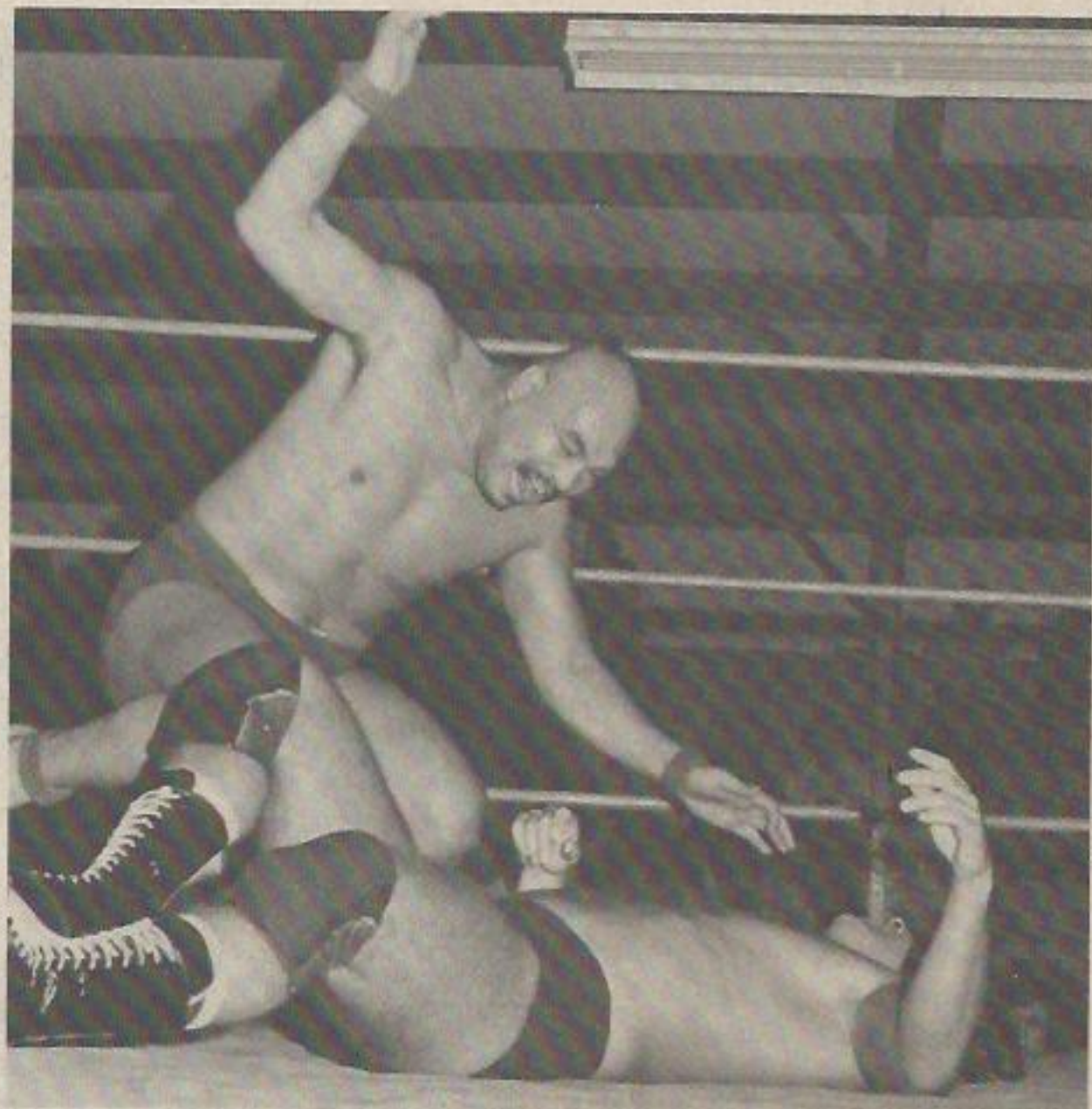
It took Blassie five weeks to turn Khan into his kind of wrestler. The manager worked tirelessly, pushing the Mongolian terror to his limits. Blassie didn't have to teach Khan how to be savage; Blassie taught him how to do it better. At the end of training, Killer Khan may have become the most dangerously brutal wrestler on earth.

When Blassie went to get Khan his first WWF match, the commissioners had already heard about the new man. They tried their best to keep him out. As one official said at the time, "We try to keep this as clean a sport as possible. Letting Khan wrestle would be insane. If there's any way we can possibly stop him, we will."

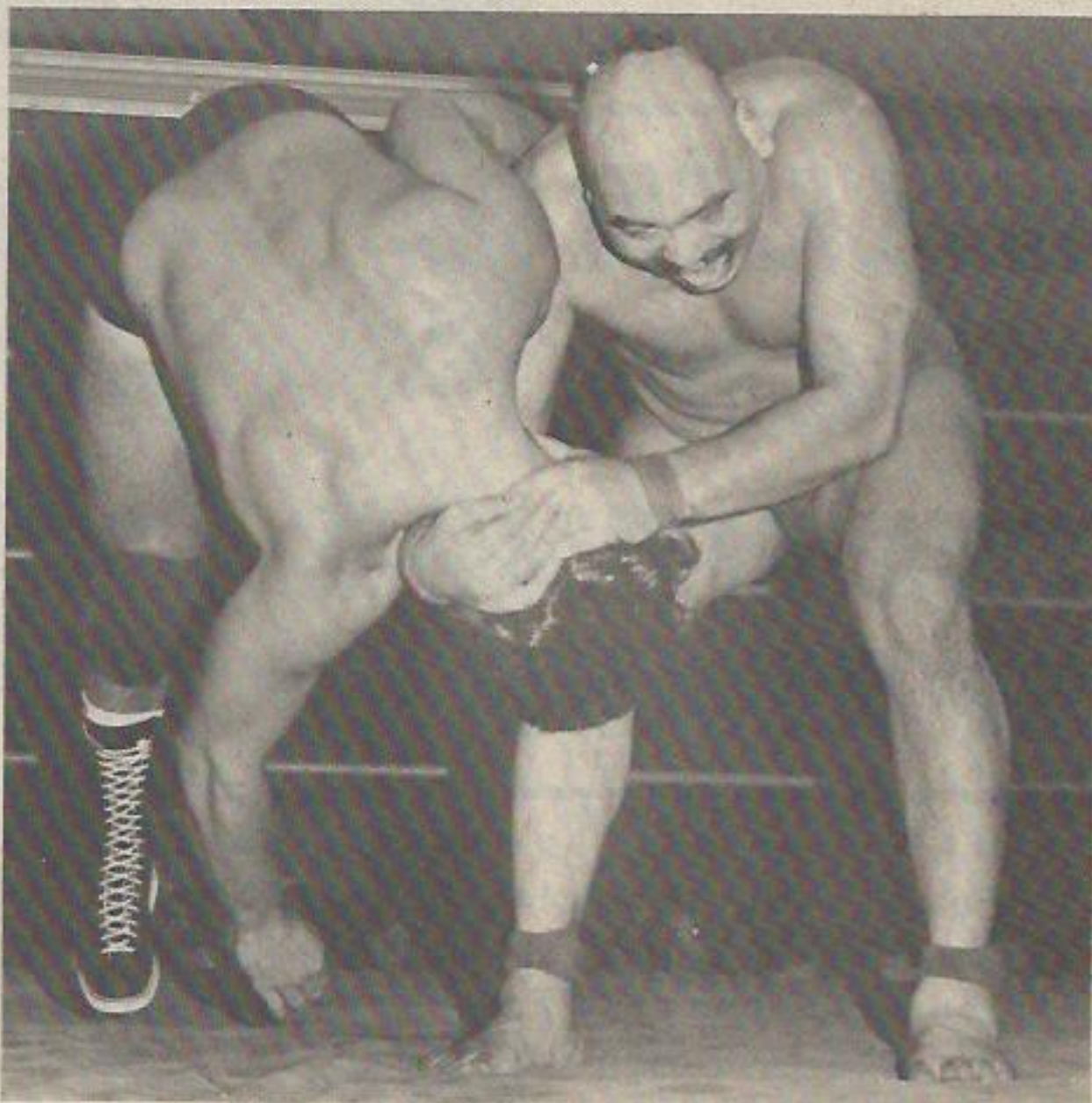
As the commissioners found out, there wasn't any way to stop him. Khan had as much right as anyone else to go after the WWF title. Blassie screamed and ranted about discrimination, but he knew all along they couldn't do anything. Killer Khan would get his chance to wreak havoc in the WWF.

His first match against a young rookie was a horror of brutality. The inexperienced youngster never stood a chance. More brave than smart, the doomed youth struggled valiantly when he should have

*(Continued on page 64)*



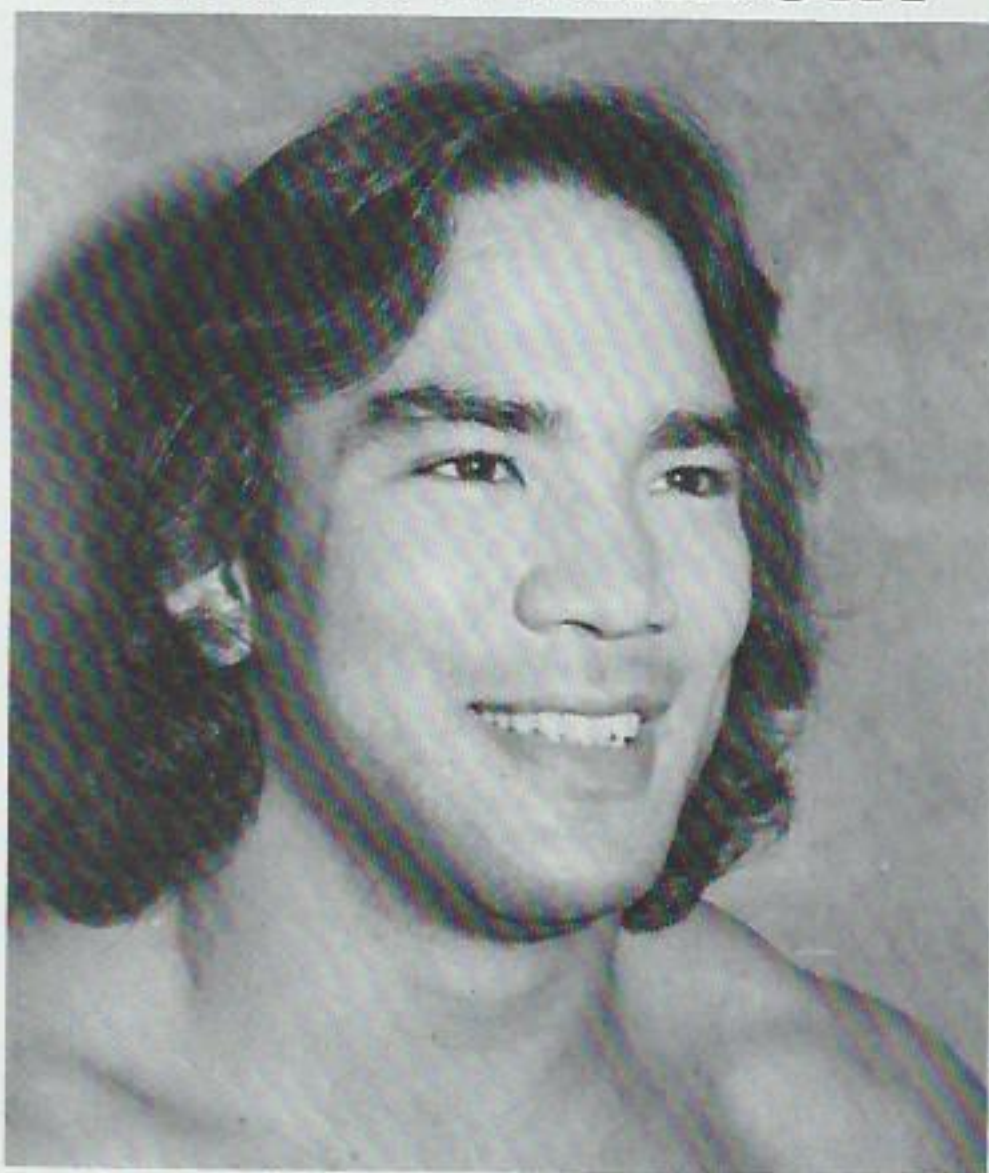
*Notorious WWF manager Freddie Blassie was very impressed with the sadistic nature Killer Khan displayed against Terry Taylor in Georgia. He seems to be enjoying himself as he delivers a karate thrust (above) and snapmares Taylor to the mat (below).*





## CLOSE-UP

### RICK STEAMBOAT



**O**NE OF WRESTLING'S rising superstars, Rick Steamboat has already achieved monumental heights in his short career . . . While still a young man, Steamboat captured the United States Heavyweight title, the first of many crowns . . . In addition to that prestigious belt, Steamboat has also won the Mid-Atlantic title several times, most recently from detestable Hussein Arab . . . Versatile in his skills, Steamboat has been a member of championship Mid-Atlantic tag teams and NWA tag teams . . . Though he has teamed with many different wrestlers, Steamboat's favorite partner continues to be Jay Youngblood . . . Considered one of wrestling's sexiest wrestlers . . . Works long and hard in the gym perfecting his

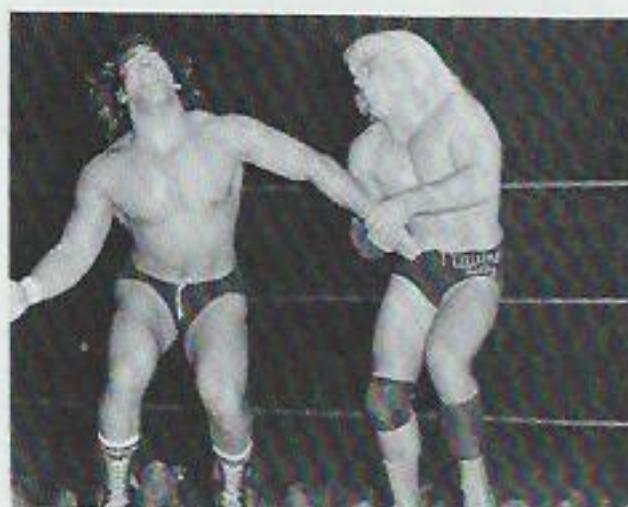
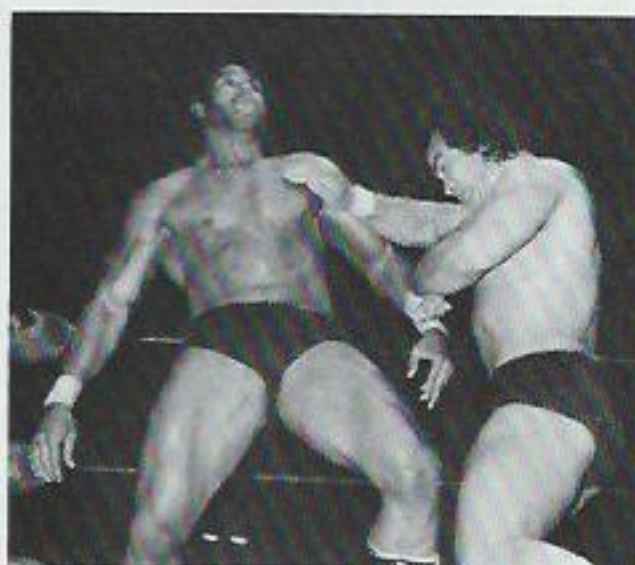
punishing array of maneuvers . . . Never shrinks from a fight . . . Earlier in his career, Steamboat was unable to control his volatile temper, resulting in a record number of disqualifications . . . Finally, Steamboat learned how to harness his rage and channel the anger to his advantage . . . Has been involved in some of wrestling's most violent feuds . . . His feud against Ric Flair threatened to destroy both men, but Steamboat and Flair finally buried the hate and are now close friends . . . Against men like Greg Valentine, Ernie Ladd, and Baron Von Raschke, Steamboat continues the war, unable to settle the feuds . . . Still harbors dreams of winning the NWA title from Harley Race . . . Always gracious and kind to fans.



## CLOSE-UP

### TOUGHEST MATCH

"My series of matches against Ric Flair were the toughest I've ever had. A couple of times I thought one of us would die. During the matches, we forget all about any rules of civilization and just battered each other like wild animals. I still can't believe we're such good friends after what we did to each other in the ring."



### FAVORITE MANEUVER

"Without a doubt, it's gotta be the karate thrusts. I love this maneuver because it combines every element of wrestling; speed, strength, agility, and concentration. And I'm proud of it because it's my own creation and while others might try to copy it, everyone knows it is my maneuver."



### MOST HATED

"Well, I've got a few to pick from, but right now, I'd have to say the one person who fills my belly with disgust has to be Baron Von Raschke. You'd think someone that ugly woulda been thrown out of wrestling a long time ago. But anyone who underestimates the Baron is a fool. He's a very dangerous man."

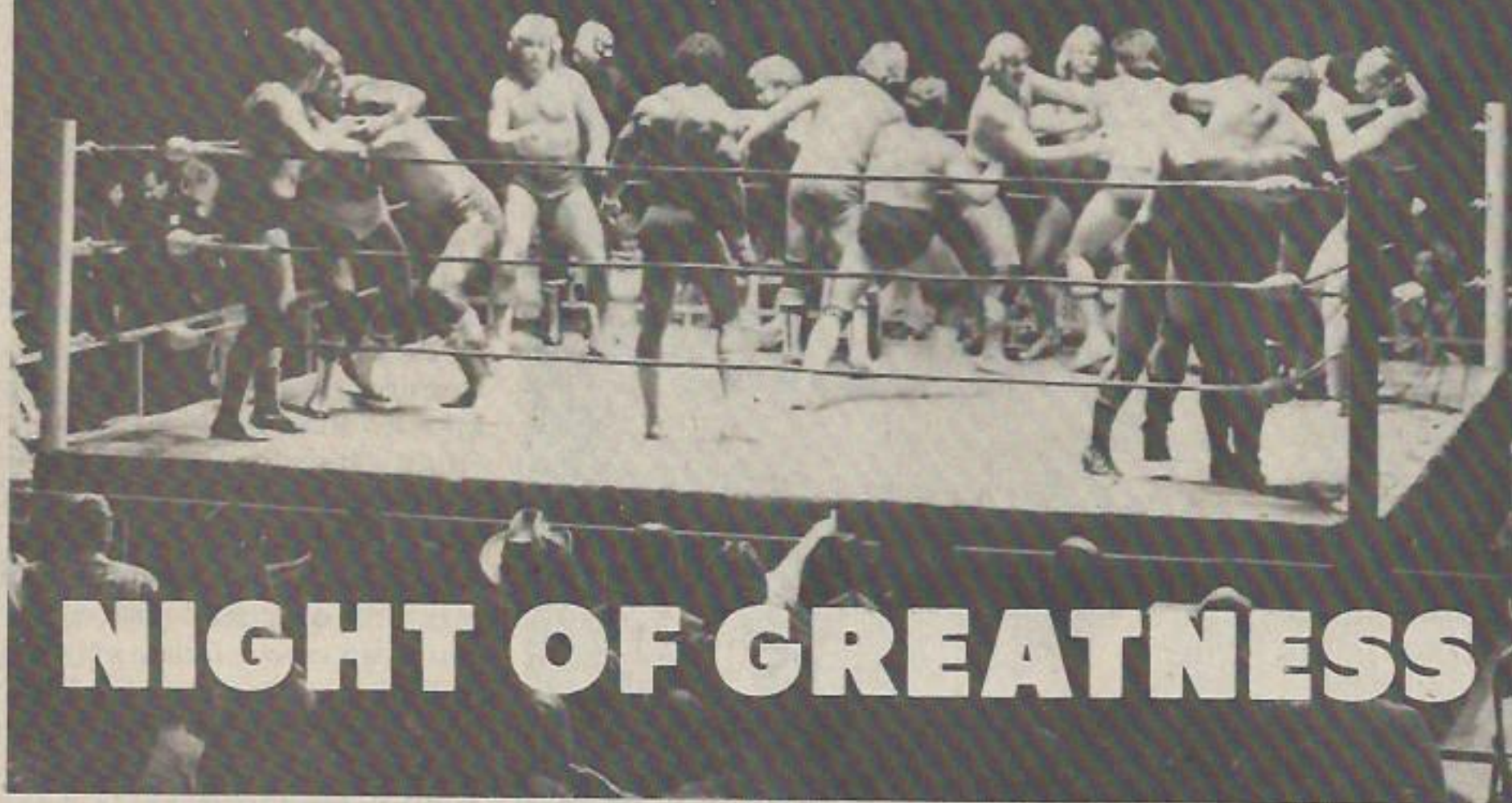


### GREATEST MATCH

"Ah, has to be the title match against Harley Race. We fought really hard that night. I don't think I was ever better. I did everything I could against a great wrestler. I wish it would've had a better ending instead of the 60-minute draw, but I was real proud of myself that night."



# TONY ATLAS'



## NIGHT OF GREATNESS

**“WHAT A NIGHT,”** Tony Atlas chuckled and sagged in happy exhaustion against his locker door. “Man, what a night. I’m so tired I can’t move, but it surely was worth it.”

The first half of Atlas’ night of greatness focused upon the Georgia Heavyweight title, at the time held by Dennis Condrey, a notorious rulebreaker.

“Don’t like the man, never



did, and I never will,” said Atlas.

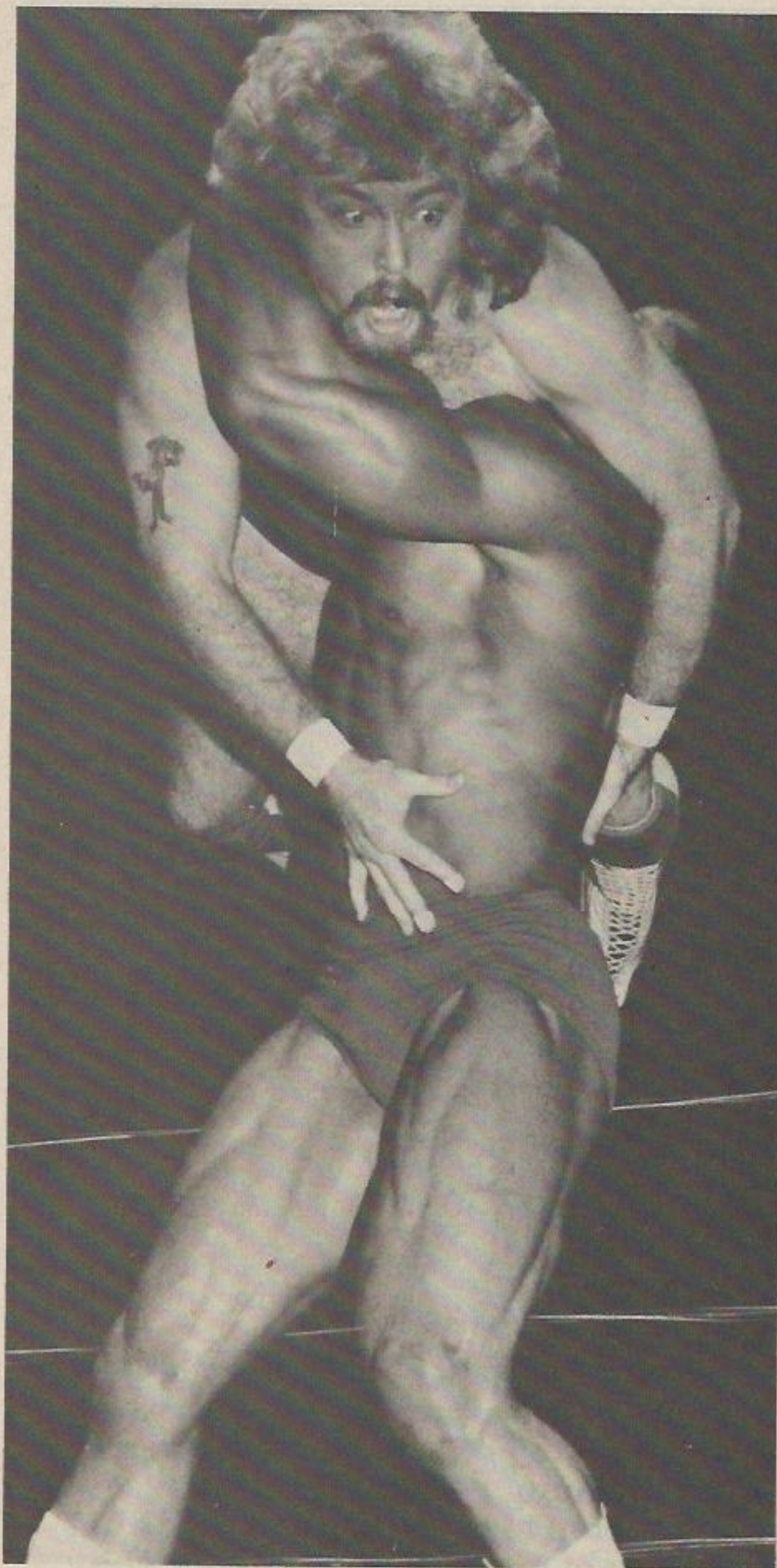
The dislike was mutual.

“Only reason I gave Atlas a shot at my belt was ‘cause I felt sorry for him,” said Condrey. “He’s so lame and dull, what else he gonna do except wrestle?”

That’s all Atlas wanted to do against Condrey. Harnessing his massive strength and channeling them into one overpowering sustained barrage, Atlas simply

Tony Atlas stands upon the portal of wrestling immortality. A few more matches, and he can honestly take his place among the young superstars. In a recent match, Atlas took a giant step forward toward fulfilling the unanimous prophecies of greatness. This was Tony Atlas’ night to stand alone in the illuminating rays of genius





*Dennis Condrey seems amazed by the awesome strength shown by Tony Atlas as he is curled into the air like a 75-pound barbell. Atlas achieved the highest honor of his career when he whipped Condrey for the Georgia Heavyweight title.*

destroyed Condrey to win the Georgia title.

But wait, he wasn't finished. Still dripping with sweat from his championship triumph, Atlas participated in a brutal 22-man Battle Royal. More was at stake in this gruesome ordeal than winning another Battle Royal.

The winner received a promised shot at Harley Race's NWA title on Thanksgiving Day.

The very best and meanest of Georgia wrestling fought in that Battle Royal. Dennis Condrey, Assassin #2, Roger Mason, Stanley Lane, Killer Khan, Stan Hansen, and Ole Anderson were among the combatants.

Relying on a dazzling mixture of speed, strength, and shrewd wrestling instincts, Atlas survived the unrelenting brutality and captured the Battle Royal—and his shot at Race.

Memories of their first and last meeting still haunt Atlas, curling his handsome features into a mask of pained frustration.

"I shoulda won that match and the title right then and there," recalled Atlas. "Fact of the matter is, I did win the match but the lousy bell stopped me 'fore I could claim the belt."

In that match, Atlas had Race in the sleeperhold, but the bell chimed, signifying an end to the match and a temporary end to Atlas' title hopes.

But Atlas didn't dwell too long on the disappointments of the past. There was the Georgia title to consider and a new opportunity for the future.

"I owe this moment to a lotta people," said Atlas. "I don't wanna sound like all



the other guys who thank everyone without feelin' it, but I really wanna thank my family, who been real supportive of me.

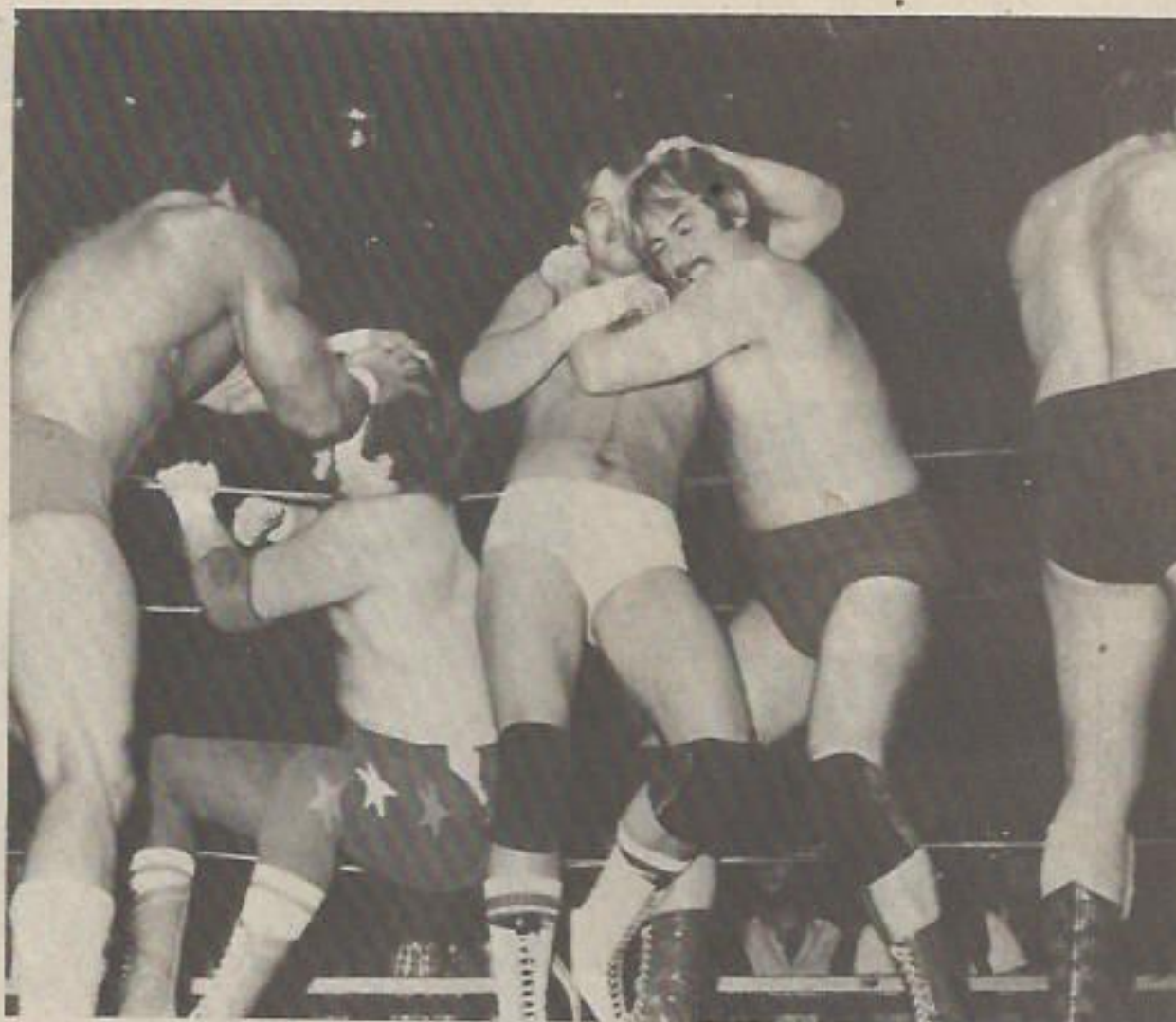
"And I wanna thank all the wrestlers who helped me and believed in me back in the beginnin', when I was just another kid. I wanna thank Mr. Rasslin' II and Mr. Rasslin' for bein' such good friends and always listenin' to me and helpin' me out with my moves.

"You know, in times like this, you think 'bout how important your friends are to you. I had some dark times when I really worried whether I'd ever make it big. But II and Mr. Rasslin' always kept on me, always keepin' my confidence up. They told me I hadda be patient, that someone as talented as me would finally do it someday.

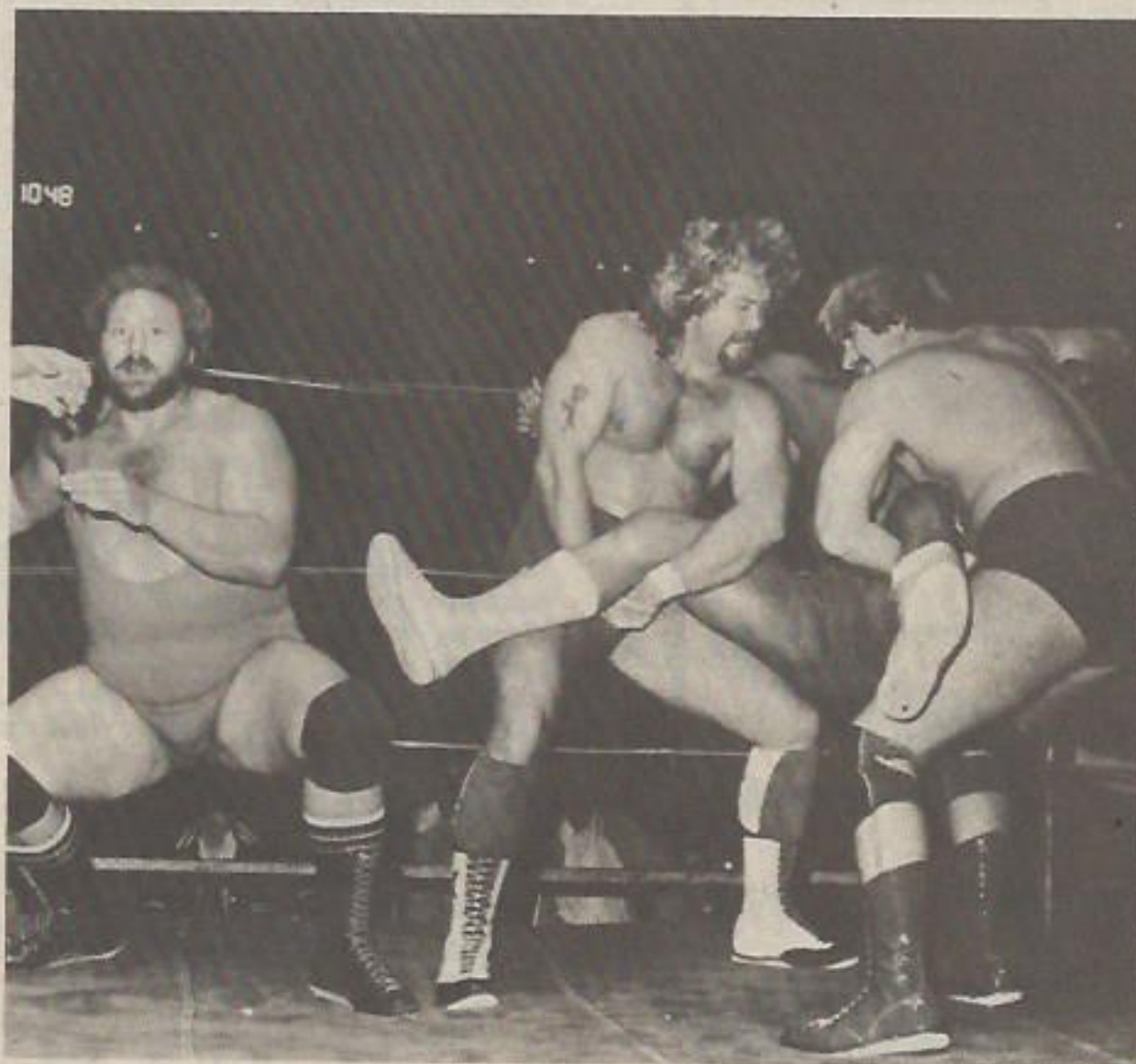
"I don't know how I coulda done it without 'em, really don't. No man can be alone in this sport. It's too gruelin' and too demandin' without people behind you. I 'member one night in particular, back durin' my rookie year.

"I'd been in a real bad brawl with this maniac. We beat each other silly and both of us staggered outta the ring like two half-dead animals. I managed to get myself back to the dressin' room, where I just felt like rollin' over and sayin' good night, that's how poorly I did feel.

"II came in and asked me how I was feelin'. I told him I didn't think I could stand this anymore. Well, that white mask pulled together in a real angry sorta frown. II said I hadda tough it out, that each and every match hadda be a learnin' experience. He told me I was too good not to



*After a brief rest period Atlas and Condrey came back to compete in the 22-man Battle Royal. Tony, riding on the crest of his earlier victory, personally eliminated seven wrestlers and assisted on three others (above). Condrey and Charlie Fulton grab Tony's legs and make a wish (below), but it did not come true.*



make it. He told me I'd be champion someday. Well, to hear a great man like II tellin' me that made me feel real good. I knew right then

and there I'd be champion.

"That's why I gotta share this championship belt with all my friends. I just wanna say thanks." □







## Gagne Retiring?

BY MATT BROCK

MINNEAPOLIS, MN—Once again, the rumor mill churns out the daily broadsides at Verne Gagne and his cherished AWA title. No matter the denials, speculation increases that the great champion will put aside his title and retire.

"What can I say?" asked Gagne, shrugging. "Much as I tell people I won't retire, no one seems to believe me. I am telling everyone that I'm champion and the only way I'll put aside my belt is when someone comes along who can beat me. Frankly, I don't see anyone capable of that."

## Rich Wins "Most Hated"

BY PETER KING

MEMPHIS, TN—The fall of Tommy Rich from the ranks of beloved wrestling figures bottomed out with a sickening thud. Once considered a top rising scientific wrestler, Rich abruptly turned bad guy. After leaving Georgia, Rich ran wild in Memphis, ignoring every rule he'd ever followed.

Compounding Rich's violent mental twist is his utter lack of regret.

"What the hell should I care what anyone says or thinks?" snarled Rich. "I'm fed up listening to fans or reporters or anyone. I'll get farther much faster just listening to myself."

## Moondogs Debut Under Lou Albano

BY GARY MORGENSTEIN

NEW YORK, NY—Following a long line of talented, devious wrestlers, Captain Lou Albano



TO THE MOON: Lou Albano discusses his latest tag team find, The Moondogs. Does the Captain have enough time for The Moondogs and The Samoans?

introduced his latest discovery, The Moondogs.

"They're the greatest, the meanest, the toughest, you gotta believe they'll storm through this area leaving bodies and blood and heads and legs and screams and cheers, I tell ya, they're great. I found 'em, I made 'em, I taught 'em, they're like my brothers, like my flesh and blood, only a matter of time before they go all the way."

Rick Martel and Tony Garea have already vowed to go after The Samoans' WWF tag team, Albano's other wrestling tandem. But questions remain as to the feasibility of Albano managing two potentially competing tag teams. On that subject, Albano declined comment.

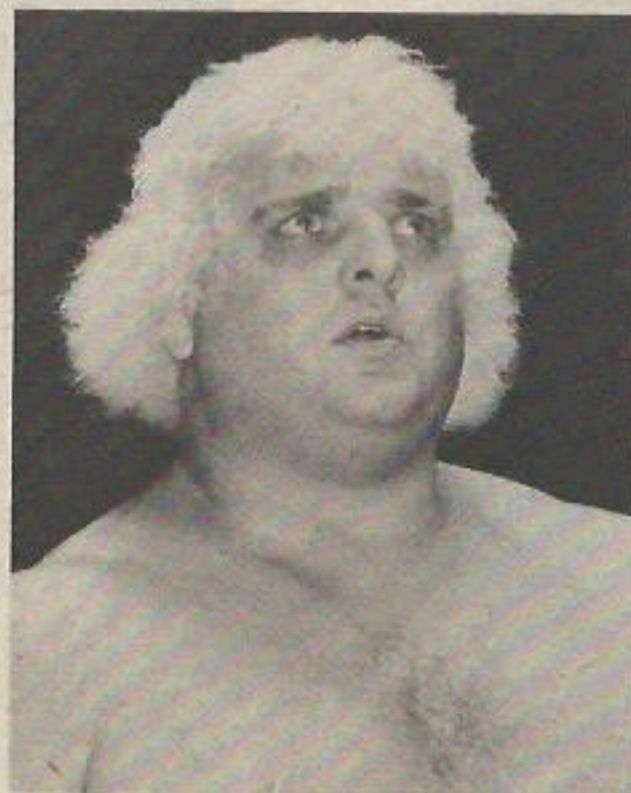
## Rhodes Whips "Twin" To Take Florida Belt

BY BILL APTER

TAMPA, FL—Bobby Jagers had his malicious fun. He went around the state posing as Dusty Rhodes and seeding resentment and hate against the popular American Dream.

Try as Dusty would to deny he had done things Jagers did, no one would believe him. The only way Rhodes could convince people who was the real Dream was in a match for the Florida Heavyweight title.

When the match ended, there was no longer any doubt in anyone's mind about who the Dream was. Or who the Florida champ was. It was Dusty Rhodes.



THE ONE AND ONLY: Dusty Rhodes captured the Florida title from his look-alike, Bobby Jagers.

## AROUND THE GLOBE

NEW ORLEANS, LA

"Big Cat" Ernie Ladd and Leroy Brown are the new state tag team champions. Combining their forces, they are running roughshod over all the scientific wrestlers. Fans here have never seen a more ruthless team.

GREENSBORO, NC

Roddy Piper has taken the Television championship of the Mid-Atlantic region. Piper is set to defend the belt against Ric Flair, a man he calls "not talented in every way!"

NEW YORK, NY

Many people believe that Bruno is not content with the way he finished his battles with Larry Zbyszko. They believe he is ready to sign another match against Larry and he wants it at the Garden.

MEMPHIS, TN

Jerry Lawler got a match against his former manager Jimmy Hart. With Lawler on his way to victory, Hart's newest protege, hated Tommy Rich, had to come in and rescue Jimmy from Jerry's clutches.

TOKYO, JAPAN

WWF champion Bob Backlund successfully defended his championship here, upsetting many of Japan's top wrestlers.

MINNEAPOLIS, MN

Dino Bravo against AWA champion Verne Gagne? It finally may come off! Negotiations are underway to sign the two scientific stars to what could become the classic match of the year.



# LOOKING AT...

## Matt Brock:



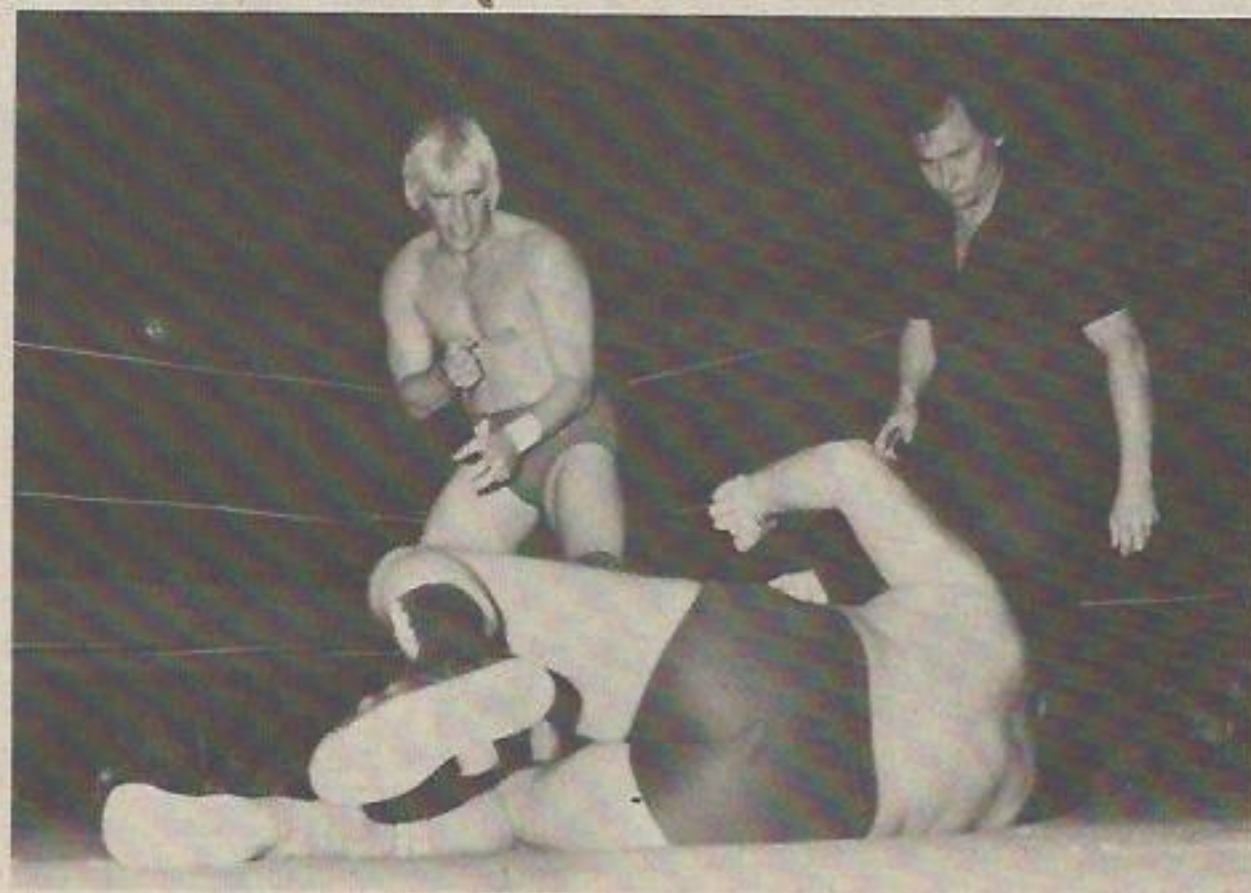
**S**O TOMMY RICH hates the fans, does he?

I'm looking at Rich through narrow, angry eyes. I feel both rage and hurt over his contemptible attitude and change. Yes, this isn't a dispassionate analysis of Rich. I hold Tommy Rich up as a loud-mouthed, ungrateful punk without the slightest shred of guts or grace.

Yeah, punk, Rich. Try that one on for size.

Back when you were a fresh-faced, good-looking kid in Georgia, all writers, myself included, and the public, most importantly, predicted great things for you. And you responded warmly. You were always gracious. You always listened to wiser wrestlers. You always conducted interviews for whatever length of time the reporter needed. And you loved the fans. They loved you. Rich fan clubs sprouted like hangovers on New York's Day. Never heard a peep out of you back then, Rich. And there was a good reason. You were winning. You were on your way up.

Then you lost it. Suddenly the frustrations became more than you



*Tommy Rich was rewarded with love from the fans for the courage he showed against such rulebreakers as Killer Karl Kox. But now Rich is himself a rulebreaker. And he cares little what the fans think of him.*

could bear. Suddenly the world title which once looked a few inches from your grasp drifted further and further away. You couldn't take it, could you, Rich? Pressure got too much for you, didn't it, punk?

Instead of searching for the reasons within yourself, you lashed back in immature anger against the rest of the world. Somehow the

press was responsible for reporting your failures. You didn't mind when they threw you onto the front pages with your successes, did you, punk? Suddenly the sound advice offered by the likes of Mr. Wrestling II and others, men foolish enough to call you friend, was wrong. But it wasn't wrong when they counseled you to the top of the ratings, was it, punk?



# TOMMY RICH



*Rich lifts his opponent into the air by his leg and dumps him over the top rope (above). During the height of his popularity, Rich receives an award (right).*

And, of course, let's not forget the fans, the ultimate fools in your grand deception. You're absolutely right, Tommy, you listened much too much to the fans. After all, they're only the ones who plop down their hard-earned bucks to root you on. They're only the ones who stand on lines to get your autograph. They're only the ones stupid enough to care about you.



Right, it's their fault, huh, Rich?

No, punk. It's *your* fault. You're the one who failed. You're the one who couldn't execute. You're the one who couldn't stand disappointment, couldn't comprehend how failure is just another sign you must pass on the way to ultimate success. You blew it, punk. Instead of squaring your shoulders and marching forward, you slithered away and took the easy way out.

So I hear you're the AWA Southern Heavyweight champion. Big deal. You think you're a champion now, don't you, punk? You think you're a real hotshot. Well, punk, you're wrong.

You'll never be anything more than a two-bit coward who stomped on the trust and love of the fans. You'll never be more than a whining brat unable to face up to his own limitations and unable to advance your career with dignity and courage.

Someday you'll realize your errors and come whimpering back. I hope the fans give you exactly what you gave them.

No one needs you, Tommy Rich. You're not worth it. □



# THE FREEBIRDS



*The Freebirds, wrestling's first corporate tag team, decide which two of three will do battle.*

They are cruel. They are mean. They are dangerous. Yes, The Freebirds threaten the very survival of Georgia wrestling. By forming an unusual corporation which allows any two of the three rulebreakers to wrestle, never giving their foes advance warning, The Freebirds have altered the way wrestling is presented

PHOTOS BY BILL APTER

## BIRDS OF A FEATHER CRIPPLE TOGETHER

**I**T ISN'T DIFFICULT nor expensive to form a corporation. Recently, three wrestlers didn't spend much time nor money and may have changed the face of wrestling.

The three men are Buddy Roberts, Michael Hayes, and Terry Gordy. Together, they're the tag team, The Freebirds. They're also the corporation, The Freebirds. Therein lies the story and the fate of tag team wrestling.

Originally, The Freebirds consisted of Hayes and Gordy. These two young men were crude and tough, ignoring the rules if victory was in the balance. They were fairly successful, but needed some control. There was too much

wasted motion, too much needless cruelty that sometimes led to their defeat. The Freebirds had a reputation for being savage but sloppy.

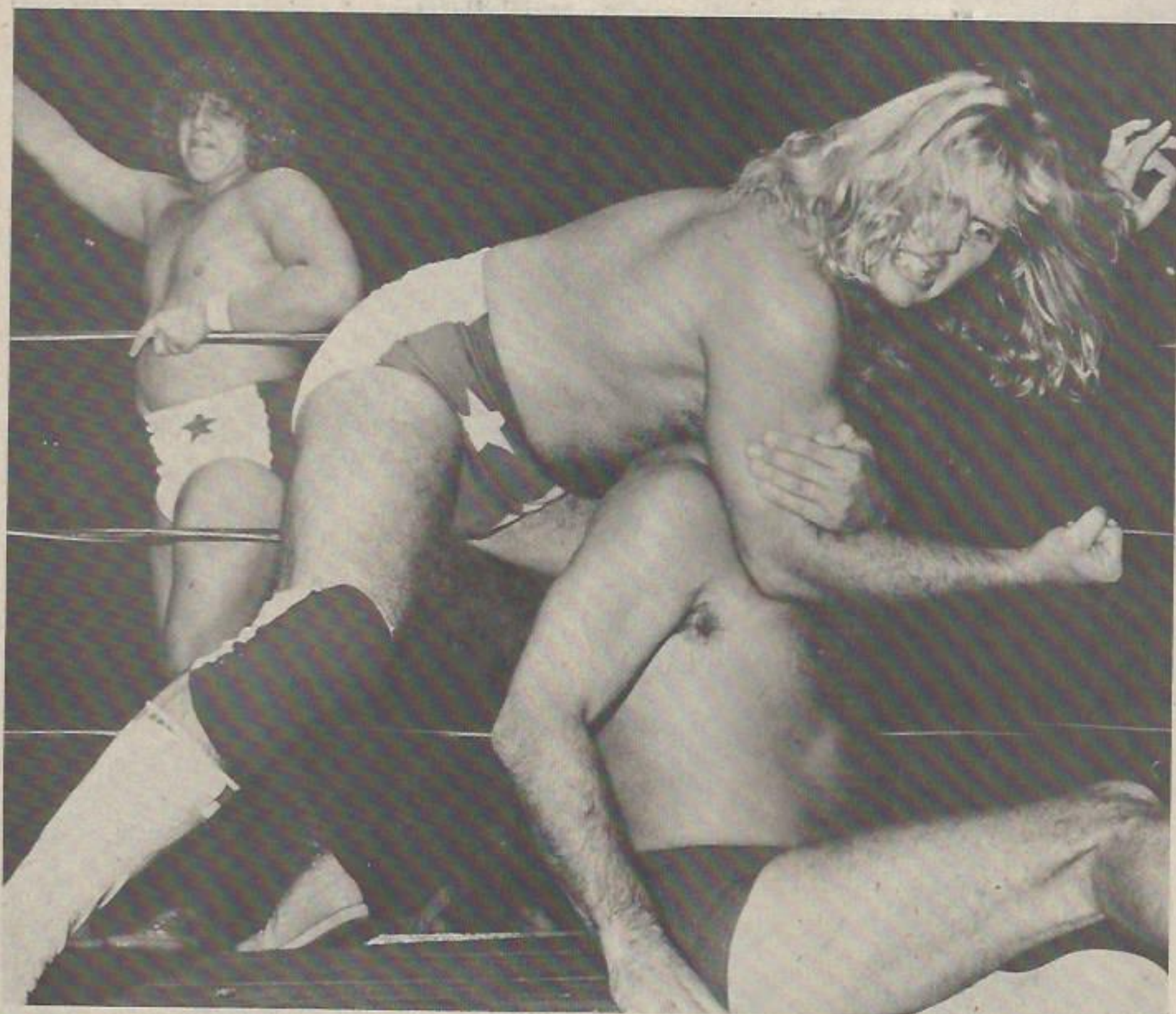
Then, Roberts saw them and liked them. They were just what he was looking for. He had a master plan and they could make it a reality. He approached the two men and the next day history was made.

Roberts' plan was revolutionary. He formed a corporation named The Freebirds. All three men were equal partners. If a promoter wanted to hire the tag team, he would hire the corporation. In other words, any two of three men would show up. Their opponents would never know which pair



*Buddy Roberts holds Kevin Sullivan down as Terry goes on the attack with his championship belt.*





*Michael Hayes chokes Jack Brisco as Terry Gordy looks on. Even though the Freebirds, Inc. decided to use this combination, it's a sure bet that Buddy Roberts isn't far from the action.*



*Roberts directs his elbow directly at the face of his helpless opponent. Can any two men stop the Freebirds?*

they would face. Roberts and Gordy were a very different team from Roberts and Hayes. Hayes and Gordy were totally different from the two previous combinations. Opponents found themselves having to prepare for three different teams.

At first, tag teams claimed The Freebirds were illegal. The entire concept of tag teams was being violated. The commissions agreed with the complaints. Roberts was ready. Kenneth Lowenstein, an expert in corporate law, proved The Freebirds were perfectly within their rights. Lowenstein then

told the commission how much he could sue them for if The Freebirds were banned.

The NWA hired a team of lawyers to prove Lowenstein wrong. After a month, the team admitted Lowenstein's case was airtight. Wrestling had no choice but to allow The Freebirds to wrestle as a corporation. This allowed them to wrestle with any combination of grapplers they chose.

It might not have meant much if Roberts hadn't picked the perfect pair for his plan. Hayes and Gordy could adapt to his style and he could adapt to theirs. Within a month, the



# WHAT THEY ARE SAYING

Every month, our reporters will compile wrestlers' most revealing quotes. Often catching the grapplers with their guards down, our reporters will work endlessly in obtaining interesting quotes on a variety of subjects

## KILLER KHAN

(Through his manager, Fred Blassie) "I do not expect to be in the WWF very long. There is little competition here for me. I expect to make mincemeat, Mongolian style, out of the people I must face here. It will not be long before Backlund falls before me. I will show mercy and not leave them dead, merely permanently disabled."



## TOMMY RICH

"You know what happened to me? I was duped by those stupid fans, that's what happened to me. If I hadn't listened to the first-class retards and morons sitting out there, I'd be world champion by now. I vow never to listen to those idiotic retards again. From now on, Rich calls all the shots."



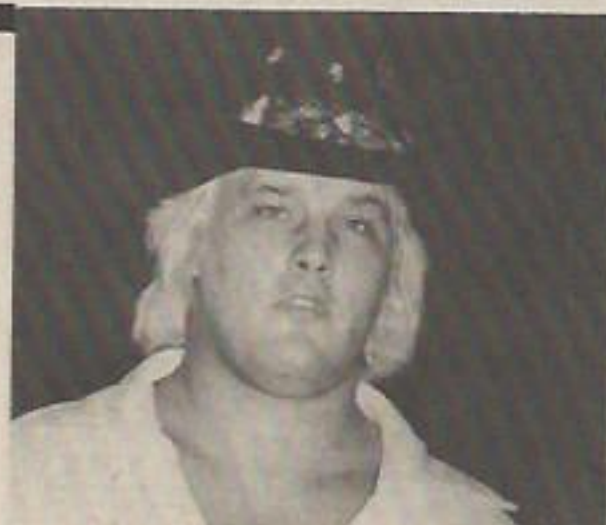
## TED DiBIASE

"Yes, I can feel myself inching closer and closer to the NWA title. I know some people say I'm too young, but I've paid my dues. I've had pieces of me scattered all over the country. I learned how to wrestle and how to survive. Now I'm ready to collect. It's too bad Race is standing in my way."



## BOBBY JAGGERS

"Dusty Rhodes? You know somethin', just lookin' at a picture of that fat slob makes me lose any meal I've had. Imagine how tough it is to stand in the same ring with him and smell his disgustin' odor. Man's a disgrace to wrestlin'. Ain't got nothin', no brains, no skill, no nothin'. It'll be a great day when I retire him for good."



(Continued on page 58)



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## KING'S COURT

(Continued from Page 6)



Backlund brings Sgt. Slaughter to his knees with an arm and shoulder lock (above). Former WWF tag team champions Ivan Putski and Tito Santana (below) left the area because neither could get a shot at Backlund's title.



WWF, Backlund only defends against rulebreakers." Santana felt he was forced to leave the WWF or have his career ruined.

Ivan Putski agrees with his former partner Santana. Even though he was a top contender in the WWF for many years, Putski only received one title shot—against Superstar Graham in 1977. From his home in Texas, Putski tried to be diplomatic, but the disappointment still was evident.

"Hey, don't you think I deserved a shot at Backlund?"



Listen, I like Backlund, he's a nice kid, but I think I should've been able to wrestle the guy. When I realized I would never get my chance, I left the WWF.

"And let me tell you something. If I was still there, or if Tito was there, do you think guys like this Sgt. Slaughter or Killer Khan would be so damn brave? I doubt it."

Because Bob Backlund does not defend his title against other scientific wrestlers, many of



Backlund lifts the WWF's latest invader, Ernie Ladd, high in the air to deliver his atomic spinecrusher.

them have left the area. In the WWF, there is simply a shortage of scientific wrestlers. Besides Backlund, only Pedro Morales and Pat Patterson have the reputation to put fear into the rulebreakers. And now, Morales said he is thinking of leaving, too.

Something must be done. If not, what will happen when the WWF has Bob Backlund as champion challenged by a top-10 consisting only of rulebreakers? Then it will be too late. □

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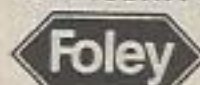
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## RINGSIDE

(Continued from Page 8)



To the dismay of the crowd, Tommy Rich has his AWA Southern Heavyweight belt returned after a cage match victory in Tennessee. Formerly one of the most popular stars in the whole sport, Rich now heads the Most Hated ratings.

Hated is a word we never thought we would see hooked up with Tommy Rich—but hated he is. Rich recently took the AWA Southern title from Jimmy Valiant in Memphis, Tennessee. As to his feelings about being jeered by fans, Tommy shrugs and says "they can all take a flying leap."

Captain Lou Albano's team of the Moondogs has got to be one of the weirdest duos in history. They are ugly. Their tactics are ugly. Their manager...

We're told that a mysterious

man has offered \$10,000 to both Greg Valentine and Ric Flair if they join forces again. Both Flair and Valentine deny they have been approached by anyone, but we know for a fact they were contacted and have been mulling the offer.

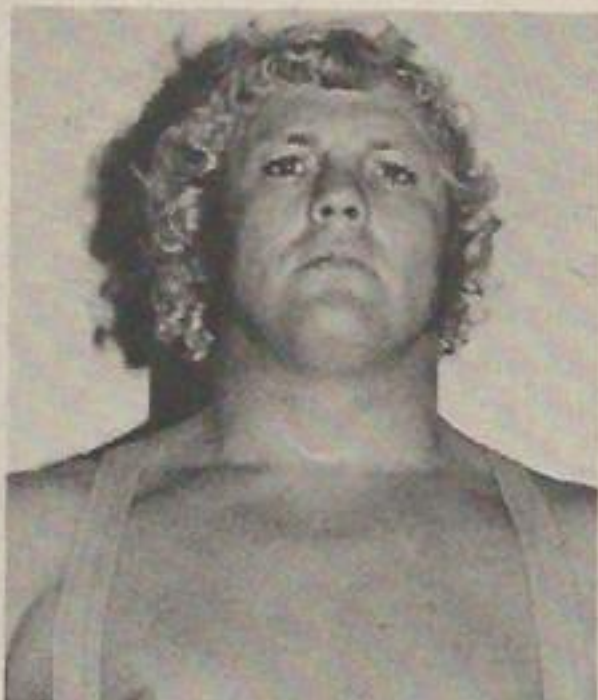
The terror team of Killer Brooks and Stan Stasiak are after the entire Von Erich family. "We want to wipe the entire group of those Von Erich bums off the face of the earth," Brooks said. "I'll heartpunch them into oblivion!"



adds Stasiak with a maniacal laugh.

In the AWA, fans are demanding that promoters team Dino Bravo with Tito Santana. "I want to stay a single grappler as long as I can," Dino says. "I would love to team with Tito on occasion but tag teaming is not my favorite." Tito's feelings were exactly the same.

Dusty Rhodes has whipped "Hangman" Bobby Jagers for the Florida Heavyweight championship. Jagers' manager, Lord Al Hays, says, "Mr. Rhodes has slighted his public by flaunting his non-scientific tactics and telling everyone he is a skilled grappler. Mr. Robert Jagers and I are stunned that this peon could do such a thing. Mr. Jagers and I went into this confrontation with the thought it would be a beautiful



**Manager Lord Al Hays charges that Dusty Rhodes broke the rules after agreeing to a Greco-Roman match with his protege, Bobby Jagers.**

work of Greco-Roman wrestling. Mr. Jagers just loves scientific wrestling, it is quite obvious. We have been the victims of a very ugly occurrence, and I hope it can be rectified. I plead with the fans to write and see to it that Mr. Rhodes has the title removed from his possession for using ugly and unbecoming tactics. It is only the proper thing to do."

Open the windows gang, it's time to let the hot air out! On that note let me say that's all for now—see you next time! □

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## MORGENSTEIN REPORT

(Continued from Page 18)

### RHODES' SWEET REVENGE

Much maligned, Dusty Rhodes has had to endure an unceasing barrage of criticism throughout his career. Many ignore his skills and charisma, instead focusing upon his repeated inability to win and hold a major title. What many fail to acknowledge is Rhodes' incredible bad luck. Surely The American Dream can't be held accountable for the fickle finger of fate. Surely The American Dream cannot be held accountable for events beyond his control. In every situation where it has been a simple test of Rhodes' courage and talent, he has triumphed. Rhodes recent capture of the Florida Heavyweight title should dispel any lingering doubts as to Rhodes' skills and guts.





## MEAN RICH

Unlike some of my colleagues on the staff, I view Tommy Rich's conversion to rulebreaking with bemused detachment. Whereas Matt Brock thunders in wounded indignation and Stu Saks gently understands, I perceive Rich as another cold-hearted wrestler intent on using anyone for his own selfish aims. I don't feel any personal betrayal. If anyone should be livid, it is the



fans who supported Rich throughout his career. Quite frankly, I don't give a damn what Tommy Rich says or does. He isn't that important. Whether he breaks the rules or obeys the rules, Rich isn't more important than wrestling. Those who equate his changeover with a threatened breakup of wrestling are way off-base. Wrestling has survived the likes of Rich before and wrestling will be here long after Rich has gone. Pure and simple, Rich is merely a small cog in the overall picture. ☐

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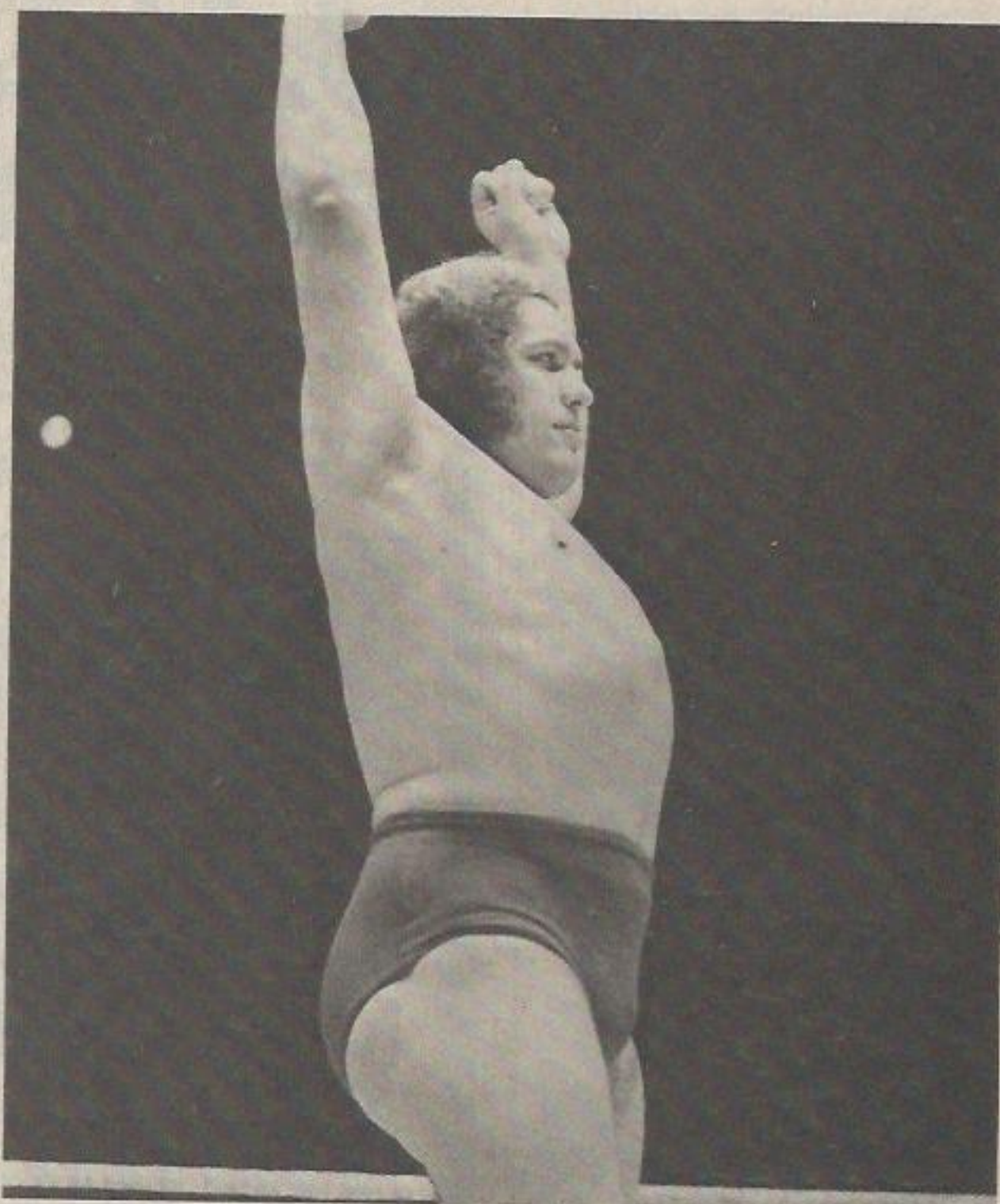


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## PRESS CONFERENCE

(Continued from Page 25)



**"Long ago, I had to make a serious choice. Either I would stay in one area and concentrate exclusively on trying for the title in that region, or I would travel the world. To stay in one area is quite selfish."**

They came back after losing. They are very dangerous and very mean. But they will not be champs for long.

**MORGENSTEIN:** A threat or prediction?

**ANDRE:** I promise my fans a tag team which will destroy The Samoans.

**MORGENSTEIN:** Is Andre included in that tag team?

**ANDRE:** Maybe.

**Farhood:** Let's talk about the

NWA. In the past, you and NWA champion Harley Race have had your share of bitter wars. But always, Race deprives you of victory.

**ANDRE:** Harley Race is a very underrated man. By this, I mean he has no end to the tricks and ways he can cheat a man out of deserved victory. Many times, as you say, I have won the title only to be robbed. Sometimes I think I will stop wrestling Race.



Then I realize my obligation to my loyal fans and know I must continue going after Race, no matter how painful the frustrations.

FARHOOD: Do you think your extensive travels may deprive you of a title?

ANDRE: Long ago, I had to make a serious choice. Either I would stay in one area and concentrate exclusively on trying for the title in that region, or I would travel the world. To stay in one area is quite selfish. I felt I owed it to my fans to wrestle everywhere.

SAKS: But you said you owed it to your fans to try and win a title?

ANDRE: Yes.

SAKS: Can you possibly do both?

ANDRE: I honestly don't know. It is a very difficult chore I set for myself. I do not know.

MORGENSTEIN: Are you pleased with the violent trends in professional wrestling?

ANDRE: No, no. Too many wrestlers take the easy way out. They forget you must work yourself into great shape and practice maneuvers. And they seem obsessed with winning at any cost. No, I would like to see more fair play in wrestling.

FARHOOD: What can Andre the Giant do to stop that trend?

ANDRE: Steve, I do not know. Sometimes I get very discouraged seeing all the violence around me. All I can do is go about wrestling in my own way and hope to set an example in my own humble manner. More than that, short of declaring war on all rule-breakers, I do not know.

MORGENSTEIN: Andre, thank you.

ANDRE: Thank you, gentlemen.

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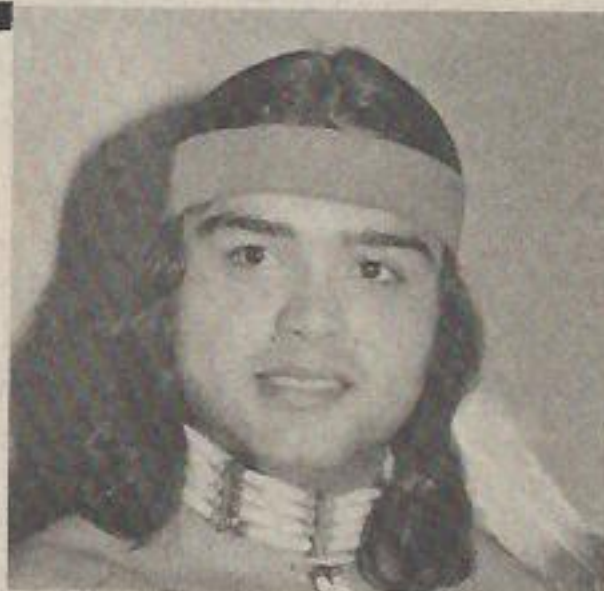


# WHAT THEY ARE SAYING

(Continued from Page 49)

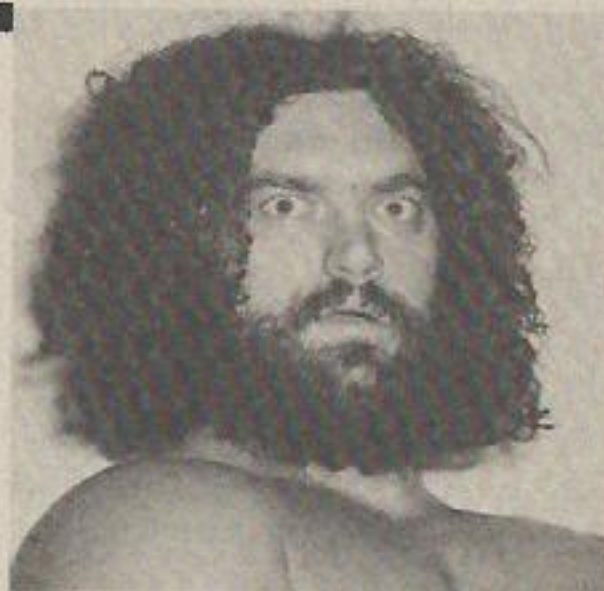
## JAY YOUNGBLOOD

"Forgive them? How can I ever forgive or forget what they did to my leg? There was no call for it. There's a line between winning and maiming and Stevens and Snuka don't know about that line. Soon as I recover, I'm going after them. I won't stop until they are broken and splattered all over the Mid-Atlantic area."



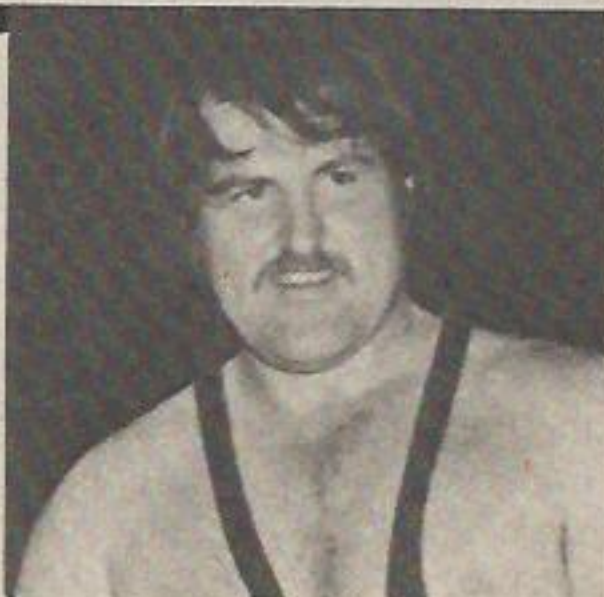
## BRUISER BRODIE

"I got my own style of wrestlin'. I don't care to be catalogued into anythin'. I am what I am. I don't care to watch others wrestle 'cause I wouldn't take on anythin' they do anyway. I don't read books about wrestlin' cause I do what I gotta do. Either I do it my way or not at all."



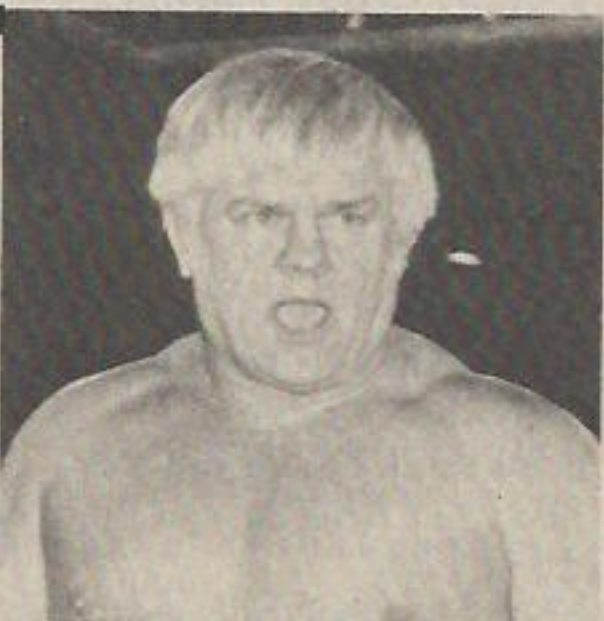
## SGT. SLAUGHTER

"The deep-seated weakness of the WWF fighters alarms me. Obviously they don't train properly. If I had my way, I'd whip them into shape so the public could see real fighting men. Either they'd make it or die, there's no middle ground. You're a man or a corpse, far as I'm concerned."



## CRUSHER

"I'm tired of wrestlin' that jelly-belly Blackwell. Soon as that fat, ugly piece of bad meat wises up and realizes he ain't gonna whip me and he ain't gonna use the name, then everyone'll be happy. But the slob's so damn stupid he can't realize he's lookin' down the barrel of disaster. Damn fool."





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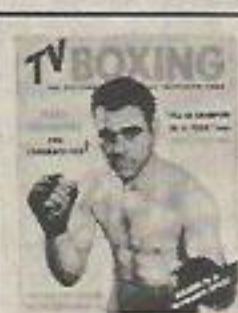
In November 1958 Stanley Weston launched BOXING ILLUSTRATED-WRESTLING NEWS, which established an entirely new concept in the field of boxing and wrestling magazines. They consisted of about 65 percent boxing and 35 percent wrestling in content of the finest writing and photographs

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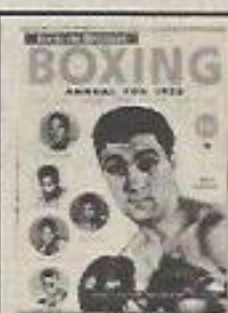


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## CONFIDENTIAL

(Continued from Page 10)

before. He'll get to his feet, lift Koloff off the turnbuckle and fling him across the ring. Or he will roll away just as Koloff makes his leap.

He did neither.

The Russian Bear (who weighed 298 pounds, roughly 50 pounds over his present weight) dropped upon Bruno with a knee to the chest and covered him. The referee began his count. "One (Bruno will push him off); Two (C'mon Bruno. Now) Three."

An era had ended with one slap of the mat. Koloff didn't even wait around for his reward. He was quickly ushered back to the dressing room by security guards who feared a riot.

But there was no riot. There was not even a sound. Twenty-one thousand people sat in stunned silence. To me, this was the most shocking event in the history of sport. The Mets' World Series victory over the Baltimore Orioles was spread over five games. The Jets dominated The Baltimore Colts in Super Bowl III. Koloff's victory over Sammartino took 14 minutes 55 seconds, but it came without warning. It was a shocking event and the fans reacted accordingly.

"Koloff had a better night than me," Bruno said in a quiet dressing room. "I had to lose sometime. Tonight was the night."

It was later learned that Bruno suffered rib damage in a match with George "The Animal" Steele in Pittsburgh just days before. Bruno, though, would rather wrestle injured than disappoint 21,000 fans. That's just the kind of man he is.

A decade later, we salute him. □

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# ON ASSIGNMENT

(Continued from Page 12)

"Tough break for the hotshot from New York City," kidded Anderson. Then they all giggled. Stevens raked in the bills, and I felt like vomiting.

It went like that all night. Every time I was dealt a good hand, someone had a better one. No one was cheating. It's just the way the cards were falling.

Stevens and Race were doing well. Koloff and Anderson were around even. Duncum was losing. But I was a basket case. By 2 a.m. I was down to \$55 and a pair of cufflinks that might've gotten me \$7 on the open market. And Anderson said my credit wouldn't get me a cold cup of coffee in the town we were in.

At 2:30, I was tapped out. The others had finished off quite a few six-packs, and each was going stronger than ever. Race was up way over a grand, and he said he was going to buy a new diamond to put into his championship belt.

I watched a few hands and then got up. "Well boys, be seeing you along the road," I said.

"Come back any time," Race and Stevens said almost simultaneously. Then they all giggled again.

Back in the office Monday, I was confronted by Brock.

"How'd ya end up, kid?" he asked.

I put both hands into my pockets, pulled out the lining to show my financial status, and flashed my most melancholy face.

"C'mon, kid," Brock answered. "Let's go downstairs. I'll buy ya a shot of Scotch. You know what? That's why they call it gambling." ☐

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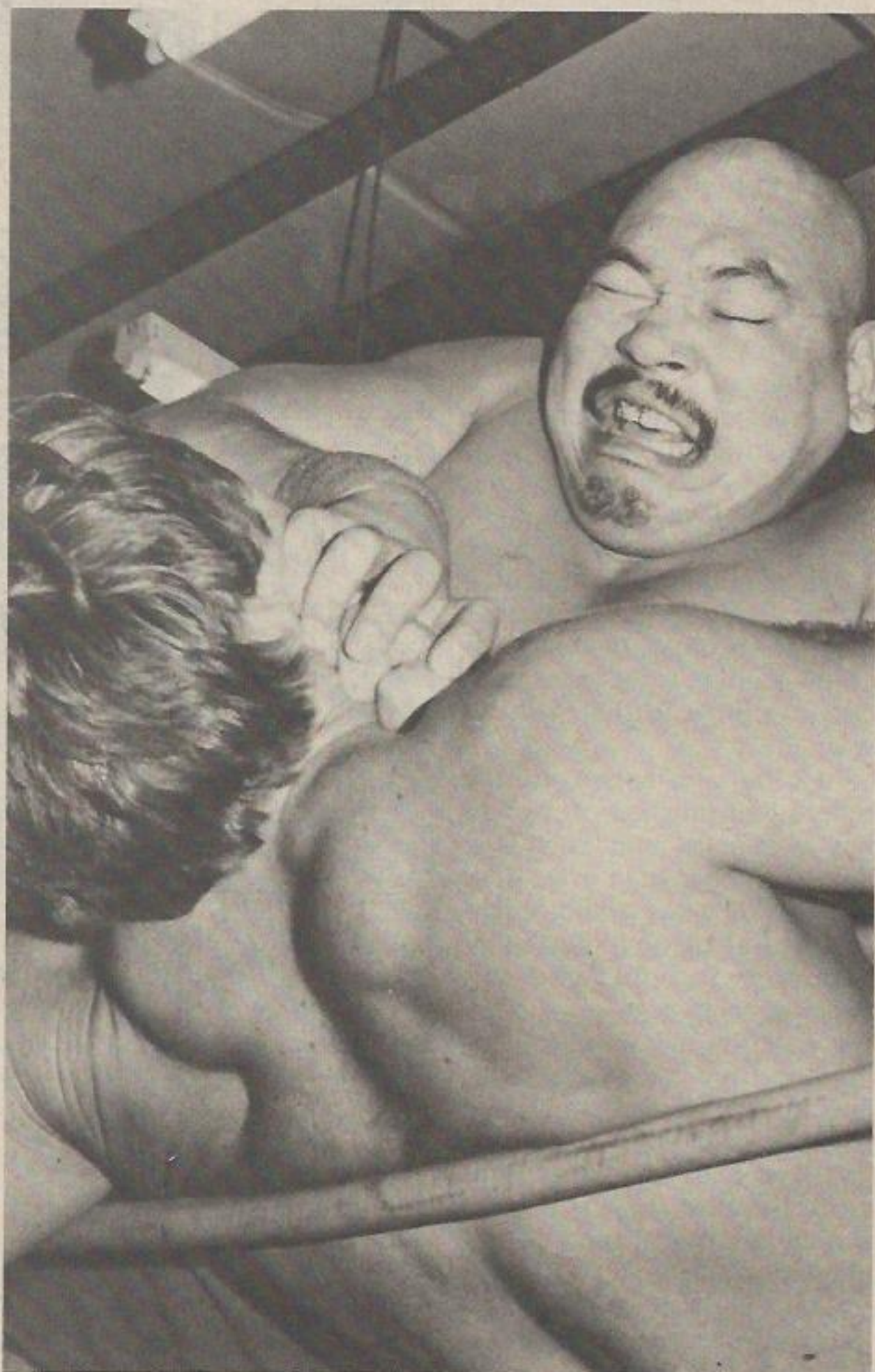
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## KILLER KHAN

(Continued from Page 34)



*Khan backs Taylor into the ropes and digs both hands into his exposed throat. Fred Blassie has successfully turned a vicious wrestler into a killer. And no one in the WWF area, including Bob Backlund, is safe.*

surrendered. A man with any sense of humanity would have given the kid a break. Khan tortured him for what seemed an eternity and then broke the lad's leg in two places. Many fans were crying. Blassie was applauding in delight.

The next several matches were

sad repeats of the first bout. Even though his opponents were now more experienced, they didn't have a prayer. Khan's skill was frightening in its sureness. With a python's deadly grace, he savaged foe after foe. There didn't seem to be any justice in the world as Khan





Khan grabs Taylor by his hair and tosses him through the middle ropes onto the concrete floor.

conquered.

What makes him even more frightening is the wide variety of maneuvers he uses. Opponents are continually exposed to new and even more agonizing holds. Killer Khan has inspired Blassie as no other rulebreaker ever has. The maneuvers are more complex, more elaborate, and more painful. Some of them are within the rules, most are not. By the time the referee realizes what happened, the match is over and Khan is victorious.

Sooner or later, Khan will get his chance at Bob Backlund's title. Bob's fans fear the worst. Khan is training every day for the confrontation. Blassie promises new and even more horrible holds. Backlund is ready.

"I've seen Khan," Bob says, "and he's everything I hate in an athlete. Some people think he'll be my toughest opponent. I don't know. But I won't let him win the title. It would be the greatest disgrace I could imagine. I'll die before he takes the title from me. That isn't an exaggeration. I mean every word of it. Blassie and Khan better believe me."

The confrontation is coming soon. One man will walk away WWF champion. We shudder to think what the future will hold for the loser.

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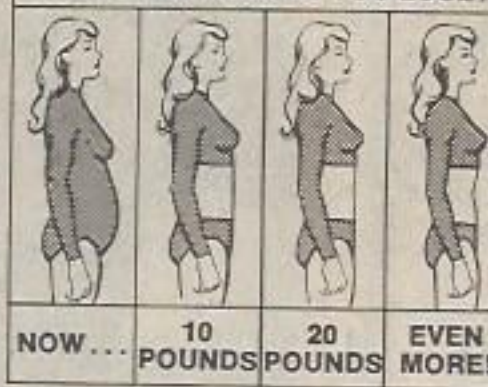
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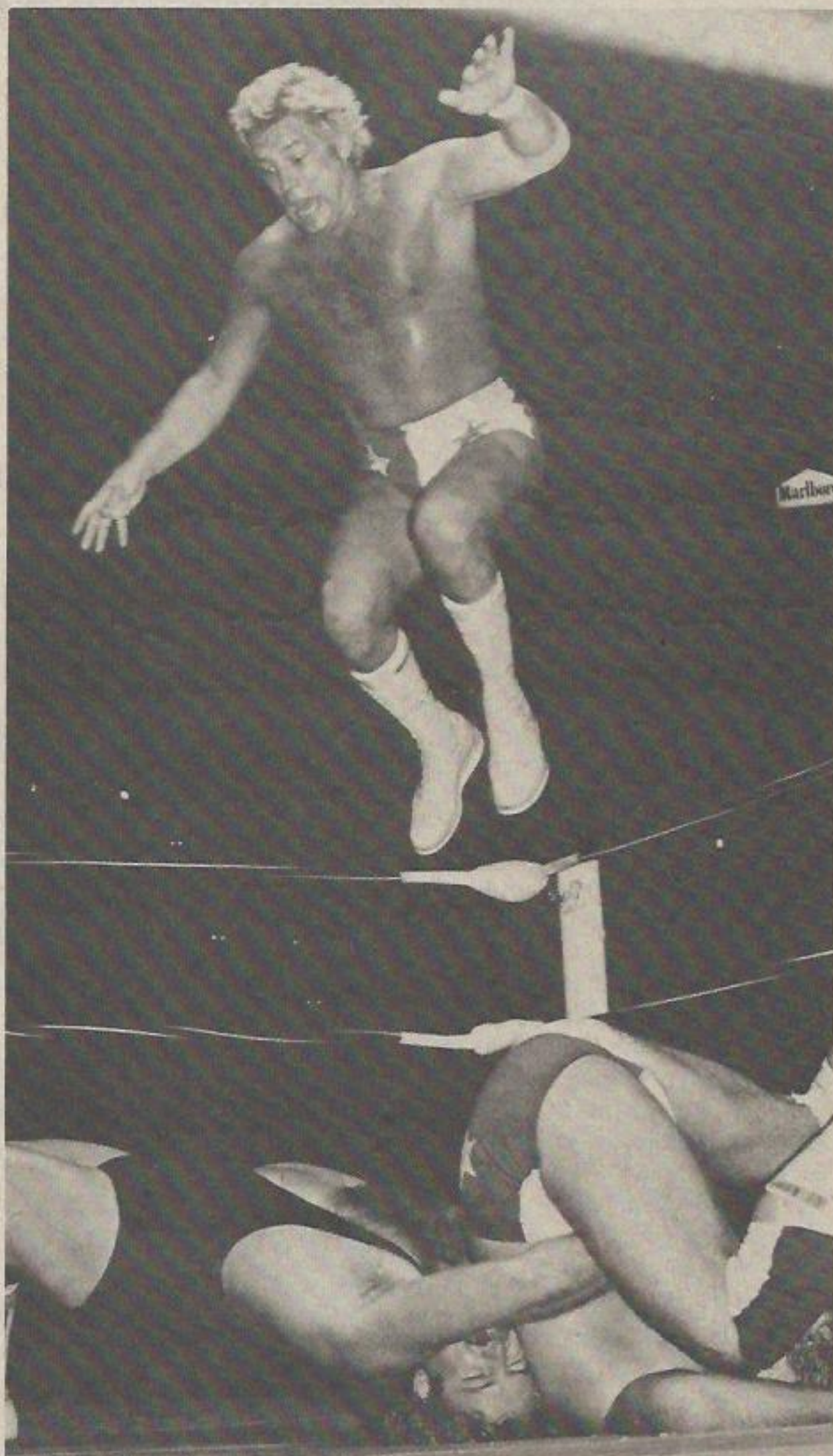
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## THE FREEBIRDS

(Continued from Page 48)

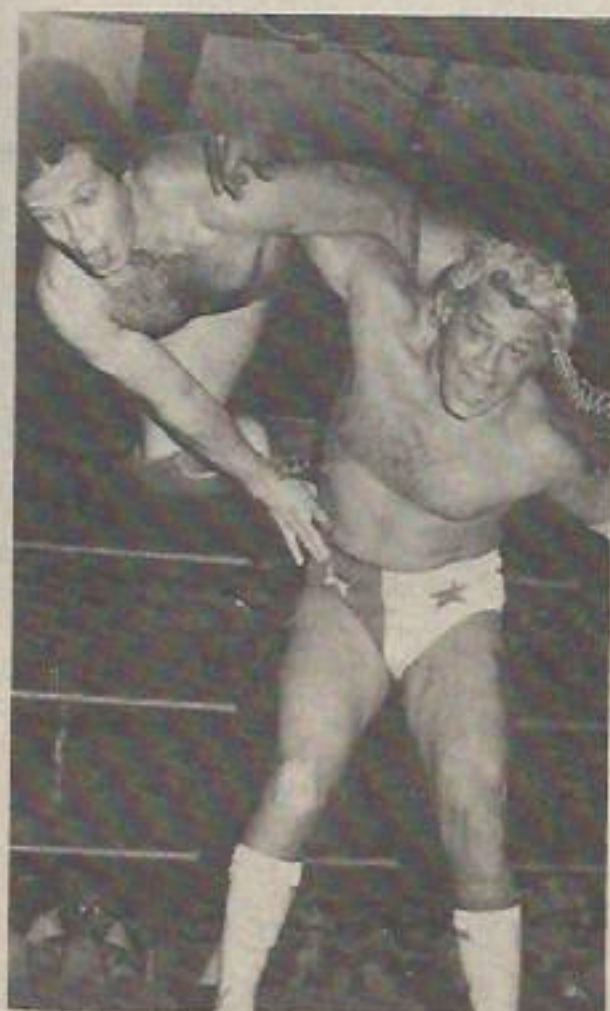


*The Freebirds think they are free to break any rules they please. Roberts foils Mike Graham's attempt to pin Hayes as he leaps upon Mike's stomach knee-first from the top turnbuckle.*

funnier than any three people I know. Take the other tag teams. Please. Love it. But what he was saying is this: other guys

couldn't work in more than one tag team. We have more brains, more skill, more raw ability than any other wrestlers around.





Roberts sends Ted Oates across the ring with a tremendous hiproll. Roberts, the captain of the team, generally chooses which two of the three will participate in a match.

We're the best because we know how to get things done. If three other guys formed a corporation, they'd fall on their faces. Right on their foolish faces!"

Gordy smiles at the thought of other wrestlers falling splat on their kissers. "We're going to be champions forever. The Freebirds, Inc. will still be holding the belt when we're all dead and buried. Others will keep replacing us. The Freebirds is immortal. And we'll be the founders. That'll make us immortal, too. My name will live forever."

While they may not be immortals, The Freebirds are definitely a major force in wrestling today. Every time they enter an arena with the song "Freebird" blaring, they change wrestling history. Whether others will follow in their corporate footsteps remains to be seen. Are we entering a new era in wrestling? Or are we simply entering the era of The Freebirds? ☐

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